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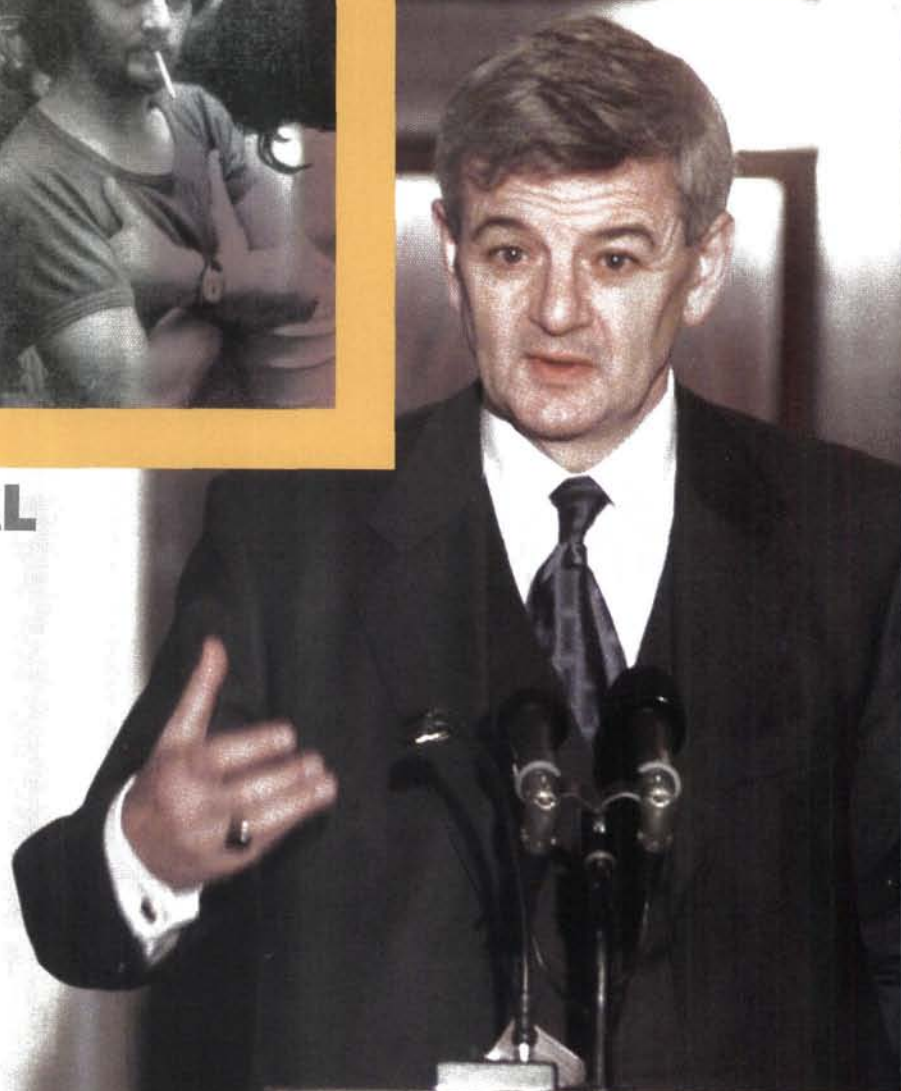
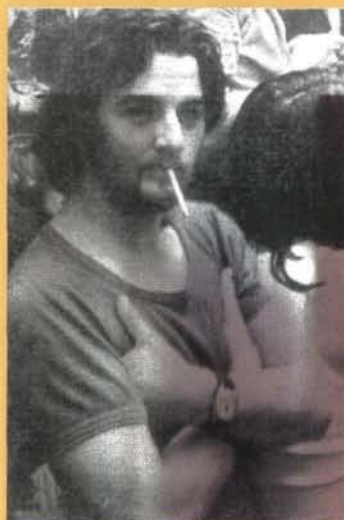
THE NEW REPUBLIC

AUGUST 27 & SEPTEMBER 3, 2001

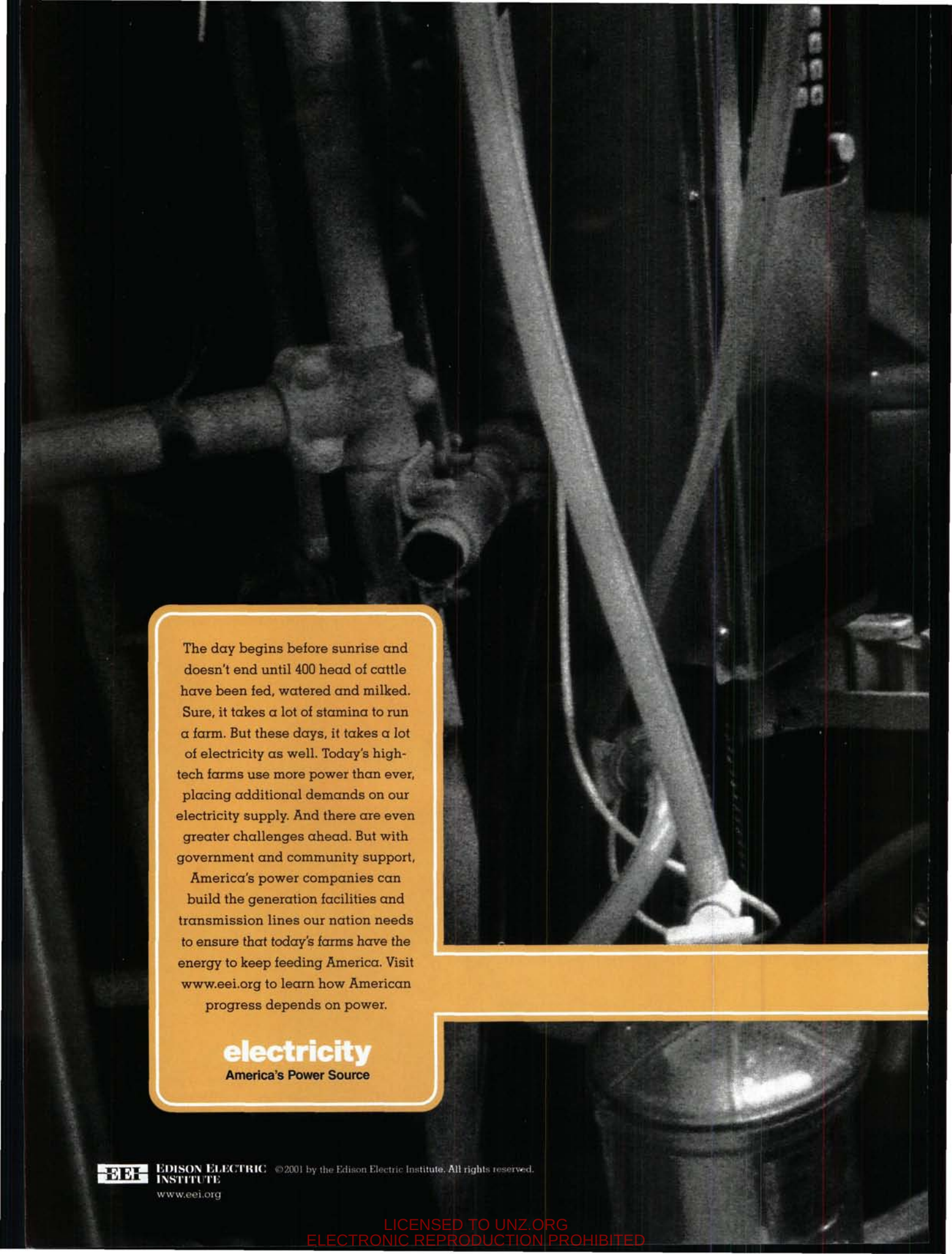
THE PASSION OF JOSCHKA FISCHER

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By PAUL BERMAN



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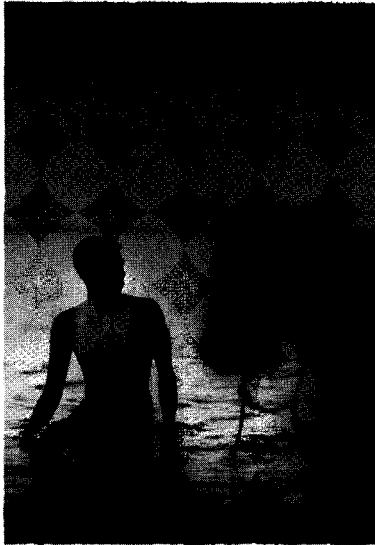
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On the Cover: Photos by BILDARCHIV PREUSSISCHER KULTURBESITZ (inset)
and AP/RON EDMONDS

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Extremist risks

TO THE EDITORS:

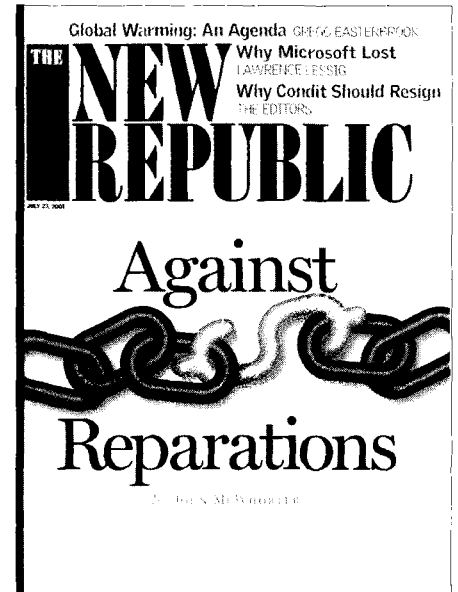
Lawrence F. Kaplan's article on unilateral sanctions against Iran and Libya overestimates the effectiveness of go-it-alone sanctions, while underestimating the value of investment, employment, and engagement in strengthening moderate elements in both countries ("Oil Spill," July 23). From the moment it became clear that the U.S. government would not risk an all-out trade war by penalizing foreign companies that invest in Iran and Libya, sanctions have ceased to deter non-Americans who want to do business in these countries. Non-U.S. investment in Iran alone now totals billions of dollars, while U.S. companies are denied the opportunity to compete in this energy-rich country.

Unless our government finds a better alternative to sanctions, U.S. companies risk being shut out of some of the world's most significant oil reserves—and that's bad news for Americans. The United States relies on imports for well over half the oil we consume. As U.S. oil output continues to fall, our dependence on imports can only increase. To be certain that our oil needs will be met, American energy companies must be allowed to secure a diversity of supply, and that diversity must include Iran and Libya.

Undeniably, the United States has a vital interest in deterring nations that promote terrorism and subvert peace efforts in the Middle East. But we need to find a more effective means than unilateral sanctions of influencing these countries. Sanctions have not only failed to isolate Iran and Libya economically; they have strengthened the hands of hostile elements in both countries.

We would do better to strengthen the friendly parties. Today, half of Iran's people are under the age of 20. They have no direct memories of the Iranian revolution and few of the anti-American feelings it generated. On the contrary, these young Iranians—and many others whom I've met on my trips there—are eager to improve U.S.-Iranian relations. Libya, for its part, surrendered for trial in 1999 the agents suspected of bombing Pan Am Flight 103.

The United States can support these encouraging trends through economic and diplomatic engagement with these two countries. If we do, we can further stability in that part of the world and our own access to essential supplies of oil. If we do not, we are likely to encourage anti-American sentiment and the very kind of extremist activity the United States is



seeking to contain through sanctions.

ARCHIE W. DUNHAM
*Chairman and CEO
Conoco Inc.
Houston, Texas*

Double take

TO THE EDITORS:

I was relieved to see that THE NEW REPUBLIC did not condone Gary Condit's actions and recommended that he step down ("Secrets and Lies," July 23). But by criticizing Condit and still excusing Bill Clinton, TNR shows an ignorance of the rule of law. The editors write, "in this case, saving a life trumps [the right to privacy]." What if the case involved rape, robbery, or sexual harassment? The issue in both Condit's and Clinton's cases is not the nature of the crime but the violation of the law. What got lost in the media circus of the Lewinsky scandal was the fact that it originated from a sexual harassment case, and Clinton undermined the trial with his deceptive testimony. That was a clear violation of the law. For that he deserves our contempt, but apparently TNR does not consider sexual harassment a serious issue.

NEIL REEDY
Conshohocken, Pennsylvania

Caught

TO THE EDITORS:

Andrew Sullivan is quite right to worry about the use of exaggerated ethical accusations as a proxy for real ideological debate ("Hooked," July 9 & 16). But that doesn't make journalistic dishonesty any less disturbing. Every lie in print—yes, even those about fishing for monkeys—is dangerous. We need a watchdog on truth, and any motive will suffice, even ideological pettiness. But Sullivan dismisses the

many ways real ideological discourse takes place within those petty squabbles. Yes, the story of Karl Rove and Intel is really about Rove's closeness to business, and the story of Clinton and Lewinsky is really about the moral direction of the country. But the specific stories bring these issues to life. The specific story about inventing monkeyfishing brings the issue of journalistic sloppiness to life as well.

HANS NOEL
Los Angeles, California

Darkness visible

TO THE EDITORS:

Apart from its vociferousness and shrillness, it wasn't clear what John McWhorter's article was adding in its attack on Randall Robinson's book *The Debt: What America Owes to Blacks* ("Against Reparations," July 23). McWhorter writes that the federal government's responses to the demands of the civil rights movement have amounted to reparations. Even more important, McWhorter argues, white Americans have now purged themselves of their long-standing racist virus, resulting in a color-blind American society. But for me, this color-blind argument is merely an attempt "to escape the horrors of Ameri-

can history," as James Baldwin once put it.

While long-standing racist vulgarities in American society have certainly attenuated in our post-civil-rights era, the color-blind American society posited by McWhorter has yet to be born. In general, any white American (whether of Irish, Jewish, Italian, or Polish background) typically conflates his or her white-ethnic self into an operational unitarian "white self." This dynamic of fashioning a relatively cohesive white American society has been reinforced since the 1950s by high levels of white interethnic marriage that have not been translated into major developments in marriage between whites and African Americans. A Kaiser Family Foundation survey released this July found that, for the first time, a slim majority of whites—53 percent—say, "It makes no difference whether people marry someone of their own race or a different race." Among African Americans, 77 percent assented to this query.

Clearly, exclusivity still means a great deal to many white Americans. One of the major messages of Robinson's book is that the cruel and massive injuries perpetrated by slavery and racism in our American democracy must be morally atoned and

compensated for. The moral and ethical soul of our American democratic civilization will remain suspended in a state of purgatory until such moral atonement and compensation are realized. What a pity that McWhorter is not ready to grasp this.

MARTIN KILSON
Frank G. Thomson Research Professor
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

JOHN MCWHORTER REPLIES:

I do not claim in my article that racism no longer exists in America, nor is my argument against (more) reparations for blacks predicated on any such claim. Thus Martin Kilson's remarks do not constitute a refutation of the specific arguments I make. I do claim that racism in America has abated considerably over the past 40 years, and nothing in Kilson's letter belies this. As for my purported "shrillness," it is curious receiving that charge from someone who believes that American race relations remain "suspended in a state of purgatory." Even if this melodrama were true, reparations would not assuage it in the least, nor are they a constructive address of the residual racism that remains for us to grapple with. ■



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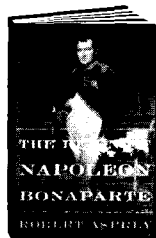


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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Mittel Way

IMAGINE THAT TED KENNEDY was Senate majority leader and Marty Meehan led the House Democrats. Or Joe Lieberman in the Senate and Barney Frank in the House. Or Robert Torricelli and Rosa DeLauro. In any of these cases, the press would note the coincidence that the Democratic Party's leaders in both houses of Congress were of the same ethnicity. And they'd speculate—at least now and then—about how being Irish-American, or Jewish-American, or Italian-American, shaped their politics.

So how come nobody notices that both Tom Daschle and Richard Gephardt are German-American?

It's largely because Germans are America's invisible ethnic group. Germans have had more time to assimilate than other immigrant communities, having largely arrived in the United States in the mid-to late nineteenth century. And they've had more incentive: In the wake of World War I, many Germans changed their names and abandoned their language in a frantic bid to stave off charges of disloyalty. As Kurt Vonnegut put it in his autobiographical *Palm Sunday*, "[M]y parents ... volunteered to make me ignorant and rootless as proof of their patriotism."

So the press isn't accustomed to thinking about German-American politics. If anything, Gephardt and Daschle are classified regionally—as Midwesterners—and journalists who profile them rely heavily on clichés about middle Americans: earnest, straitlaced, disciplined, bland. (Ironically, if journalists acknowledged that those stereotypes of Midwesterners are related to stereotypes of Germans, they couldn't deploy them so breezily.)

But Daschle and Gephardt's ethnicity is at least as important as their geography. For one thing, the two men represent heavily German-American constituencies. South Dakota, Daschle's state, has the second-highest percentage of Americans of German ancestry in the country (after Wisconsin). St. Louis, which includes Gephardt's district, is America's third-most-German big city (after Milwaukee and Cincinnati). And that matters because German-American politics is not the same

as Midwestern politics more generally. The six Midwestern states with the highest percentage of Germans (according to the 1990 census) send ten Democrats and two Republicans to the U.S. Senate. The seven Midwestern states with the lowest percentage of Germans send five Democrats and nine Republicans. Of course, many German-Americans, like Vonnegut, have only a hazy ethnic identity. But voters, like politicians, are often products of political traditions they do not fully comprehend.

Consider Gephardt's and Daschle's views on the culture war: They're not interested in it. Historically, German-Americans have never been very attracted to the politics of religious traditionalism. In its early-twentieth-century incarnation, the Christian right advocated Prohibition, which many Germans saw as a nativist attack on their culture. More recently, historically German churches like the Lutherans have eschewed the militant conservatism of the Christian Coalition. In fact, the Midwestern states where the Christian right is strongest—Kansas and Oklahoma—are also among the ones with the lowest percentage of Germans.

But German-American politics is also far removed from the cultural liberalism of the East and West coasts. And so are Gephardt and Daschle. Gephardt quietly opposed abortion early in his career, then switched to quietly supporting it. When Senate Republicans wanted a strict ban on partial-birth abortion in 1997, Daschle proposed a compromise prohibiting most third-trimester abortions, which satisfied neither Jesse Helms nor Barbara Boxer.

Rather than being defined by cultural issues, German-American politics has traditionally been defined by a certain notion of government: as active, rational, honest, and prudent. The two large waves of nineteenth-century German migration to the United States both followed purges of German liberals—first after the failed democratic revolution of 1848 and then again after Bismarck's anti-socialist law in 1878. Partly as a result, the heavily German states of the upper Midwest never developed the libertarianism of the South and interior West. To the contrary, for more than a century, their politics have been defined by government planning and government reform.

The tradition is most evident in the nation's most German state, Wisconsin. In the early twentieth century, famed Governor Robert LaFollette employed social scientists at the University of Wisconsin to restructure the state's workers' compensation and tax systems in accordance with "scientific" principles. Under his leadership, Wisconsin also became the first state to directly elect its senators. The state's tradition of

political reform continues today with campaign finance crusader Russ Feingold. But while never anti-government, Wisconsin has also championed fiscal prudence. Former Senator William Proxmire made his name as a militant opponent of government waste. And Republican Representative Mark Neumann—who came within a few points of taking Feingold's Senate seat in 1998—was arguably the class of 1994's most passionate deficit hawk.

Broadly speaking, this view of government defines Daschle and Gephardt as well. Both men have pushed surprisingly hard for campaign finance reform, despite mounting grumbles from Democratic partisans. Although Daschle abandoned his support for a balanced-budget amendment when he became the Democratic leader in the Senate, he still emphasizes fiscal conservatism in his attacks on Bush's tax cut. Gephardt has veered more drastically—as he has looked for ideological openings for potential presidential runs—but his roots are in the fiscal conservatism of the Democratic Leadership Council, which he helped found, and in the high-minded, anti-waste tax-reform bill he co-sponsored with Bill Bradley in 1986.

Why does this matter? Because, for most of the last century, this German-American political ethos was associated with the Republican Party. In fact, Wisconsin was one of the two states that gave birth to the GOP in 1854. In historical terms, having two German-Americans leading the congressional Democrats is as significant as having two Southerners—Newt Gingrich and Trent Lott—leading the congressional GOP was in the 1990s. And just as Lott's and Gingrich's ascendance signified a political problem for Democrats—their collapse in the states of the former Confederacy—Gephardt and Daschle embody an emerging problem for the GOP. Given its weakness in the Northeast and the Pacific West, the GOP cannot be the nation's majority party without maintaining its dominance in the Midwest. But Republicans are gradually losing the heavily German states of the upper Midwest: Wisconsin, Minnesota, and the Dakotas don't have a Republican senator among them. And they're losing them because the GOP is no longer the party of cultural moderation, government reform, and fiscal prudence. That mantle has been claimed by the Democrats, and it probably took two German-Americans—Tom Daschle and Richard Gephardt—to do it.

PETER BEINART

ANDREW SULLIVAN is on vacation and will return next issue. PETER BEINART's column, "Punditry," appears on Mondays at www.thenewrepublic.com.



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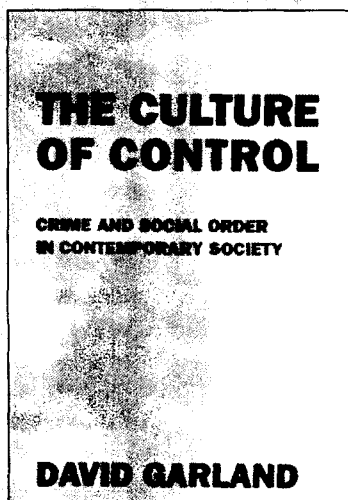
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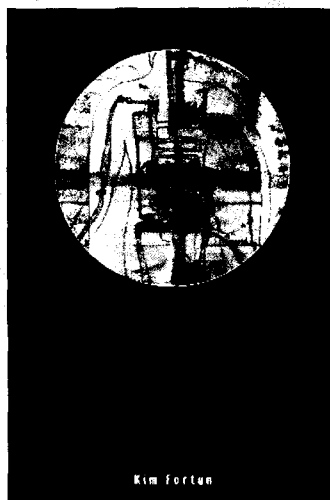
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Edited by Alice S. Rossi

Based on a national survey, this book looks at the extent to which Americans contribute time to family and volunteer work and how these contributions are affected by job obligations, focusing in particular on age and gender differences.

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Bombs

THERE IS ONLY one state in the world today that chooses to be without a border, and it is the state of Israel. It lacks an eastern border, and this lack, this extraordinary porousness, is owed to Israel's

view, honored by its governments of the left and its governments of the right, that its conquest of Palestinian territories in 1967 (they were then Jordanian and Egyptian territories) was provisional, and that the annexation of these densely populated and increasingly hostile lands is not an Israeli objective (almost the entirety of their Palestinian population already rules itself), and that the disposition of these lands must await a treaty of peace. Israel has elected to keep itself porous. It has never exulted in its occupation. It has made use of its occupation to make itself safer, and otherwise borne its costs. But those costs are becoming insupportably high. Through Israel's open door Hamas now enters. Since last September, there have been 66 Palestinian suicide attacks against Israel and Israelis. Some of them have been foiled, some of them have succeeded in their savagery.

Last week a Palestinian from Jenin had himself photographed with a gun and a Koran and strapped explosives wrapped in nails around his waist and drove on the back of a motorbike into the heart of Jerusalem and blew up a pizza joint crowded with lunching families. In Palestinian towns, the carnage at the corner of Jaffa and King George was a cause for celebration in the streets. Senior Palestinian officials explained that the blame for the atrocity at Sbarro belonged to Ariel Sharon. Then the world braced itself for Sharon's wrath, for the brutality of his retaliation. And something unexpected happened. The brutality never materialized.

Sharon ordered Israeli forces in East Jerusalem to occupy Orient House, the address that has come to represent the Palestinian aspiration to sovereignty. (The Palestinians struck at children, the Israelis struck at symbols.) Israeli F-16s destroyed an empty police building in Ramallah and nobody was injured. For a few hours Israeli tanks entered Palestinian territory and leveled a few buildings in Jenin, a poisonous place from which many of the recent "martyrs," that is, murderers, have hailed. The Israelis left after three hours. No life was lost. In an overdue attempt to put an end to

the regular Palestinian shooting at Gilo (a neighborhood in Jerusalem and in no sense a "settlement," as reporters sometimes describe it), Israeli troops positioned themselves threateningly outside the towns of Beit Jallah and Beit Sahur, and then they did exactly nothing. Some wrath! Whatever the reasons for Ariel Sharon's restraint, it is clear that he is not living up to his reputation as a worshiper of force. So far.

For months now, critics of Israeli actions have liked to point out that anti-terrorism is

a tactic and not a strategy, that anti-terrorism alone will not bring the region closer to peace. They have decried Israel's policy of striking at Palestinians who are about to strike at them, calling these killings "assassinations." The appellation is morally idiotic. Preemption is a duty of self-defense. If somebody is coming to kill you, an old Jewish adage teaches, kill him first. A government, in Israel and in any other country, that did not preempt the killing of its own citizens would be a profoundly delinquent government. That is how a government protects its people: by being stronger and smarter and swifter than its people's enemies.

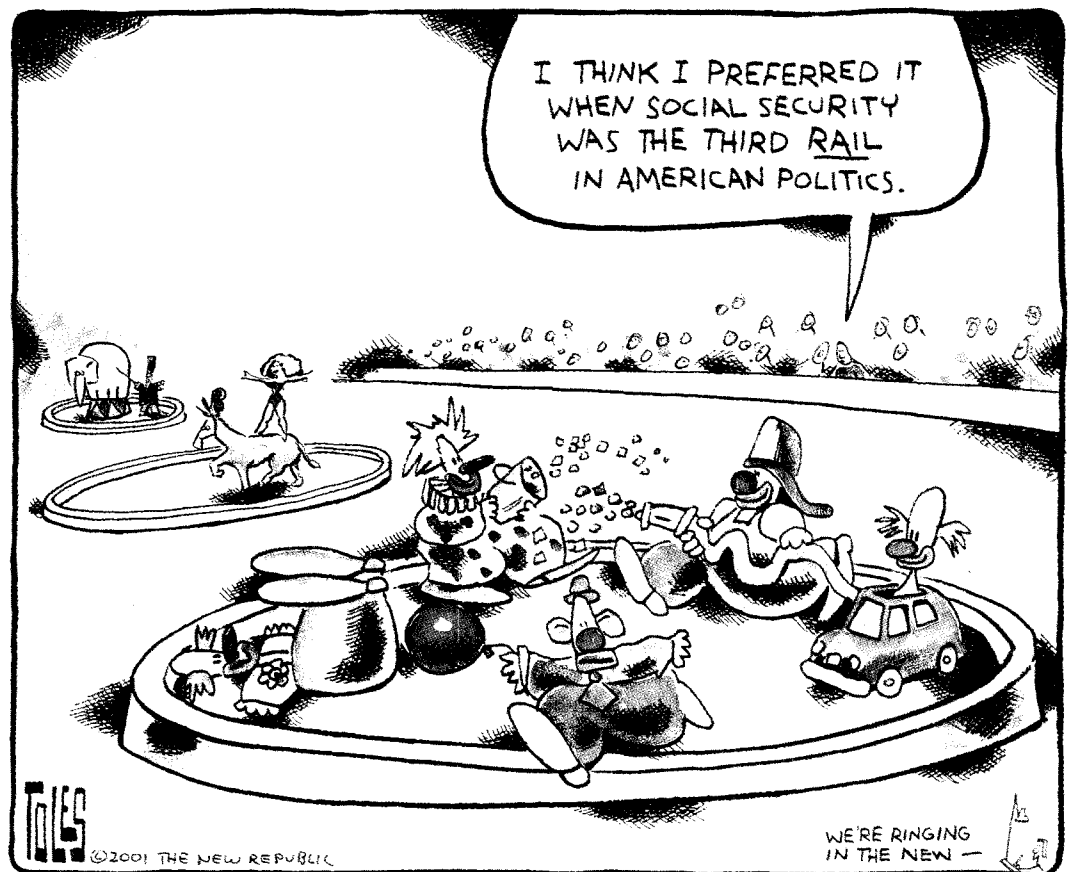
But the fact on the ground, again, is that the Palestinians are acting viciously on their rage but the Israelis are not acting viciously on their grief. The Palestinians, indeed, seem to have become intoxicated by their violence. Their politics, if that is the word, has taken on a weird, delusional quality. When the Israeli tanks rolled out of Jenin after their brief show of force, Palestinians in Jenin (as Clyde Haberman reported in *The New York Times*) described it as a "retreat." They attributed it to their own "heroic resistance," when there was no physical evidence of gunfire. They screamed that the Israelis had killed two or three people, when nobody died. They fumed that the Israelis had taken 70 Palestinians with them, when none were missing. People cannot have a grasp of peace when they do not have a grasp of reality.

Meanwhile something very different happened in Ramallah. In the Israeli air raid on the Palestinian police station, two bombs were dropped. One exploded, but the other did not. An Israeli military official told *The Jerusalem Post* what happened next: "In order to prevent innocent people from getting hurt, the IDF notified the Palestinian Authority of the unexploded bomb through its liaison officers." After a Palestinian bomb that killed innocent people in Jerusalem, then, the Israelis warned the Palestinians of a bomb that might kill innocent people in Ramallah. The political situation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict may not be clear, but the same cannot be said about the moral situation. ■

THE PRESIDENT RUINS FRIDAY: Parsing George W. Bush's statements on HMO reform is becoming a full-time job. Ever since the presidential campaign, W. has been saying he wants to extend patient protections to "all Americans." Apparently, however, this is shorthand for "all Americans who aren't poor." As *The Washington Post* reported this week, Bush has derailed a proposed Clinton regulation that would have extended patient protections to the 20 million Americans enrolled in Medicaid managed care plans. For example, under Clinton's rules, a Medicaid patient in a life-threatening situation who believed his insurance plan had wrongly denied him care could request an internal appeal—and get one within 72 hours. According to documents obtained by THE NEW REPUBLIC, Bush plans to change that to three working days and, in "certain circumstances," as many as 14. (As Representative Henry Waxman notes, "Medicaid patients who get seriously ill on Fridays are in trouble.") Under the Clinton rules, Medicaid recipients with ongoing health care needs—the disabled, the elderly, pregnant women—who are forced into managed care plans would be guaranteed access to the same specialty care they received before. Bush removes that provision, too, according to the documents. He also nixes the requirement that insurance plans send out information about coverage specifics to all enrollees once a year, so recipients understand their rights. And so on. The White House's quiet gutting of the Medicaid protections is particularly underhanded given the president's posture during the recent congressional debate over a patients' bill of rights. Section 301 of the final House bill, which Bush has embraced in glowing terms, specifically calls on the president to extend "the same rights and privileges" to people enrolled in federal insurance programs like Medicaid. But these are exactly the "rights and privileges" the president is going out of his way to *deny* Medicaid recipients. Moreover, merely by proposing to change the Medicaid regulations, Bush pushes back their date of implementation. The Clinton proposal went through the normal administrative vetting process, which is why it took almost three years to finally issue. Bush's proposal essentially starts the clock

anew, which means another year—at least—before *any* Medicaid patient-protection regulations take effect. Asked by the *Post* about the potential delay, an administration official replied, "better that this be a good rule that will work." Or, better still, a bad one that won't.

RUSH TO BAD JUDGMENT: As if the new sensory-overload "Headline News" format weren't bad enough, now comes word that CNN has hatched another plan to boost its sagging ratings: Give Rush Limbaugh a show. As *USA Today* reported this week, CNN is talking to Limbaugh about doing a program on the network; and as Limbaugh subsequently confirmed on his radio program, he's "listening." The Limbaugh courtship has been widely described as part of CNN's new effort to reach out to the millions of conservative viewers currently tuning in to Fox News—and, as such, has been widely derided. But a Limbaugh show isn't a bad idea because he's conservative. It's a bad idea because, on his radio show and in his books, Limbaugh has demonstrated very little respect for that journalistic nicety called "truth." This is, after all, the man who boldly asserted that volcanoes, not man-made greenhouse gases, are responsible for depleting the ozone layer; that America has more forestland today than it did when Columbus arrived in 1492; that Clarence Thomas couldn't have harassed Anita Hill because Hill "wanted to continue to date him" (they never dated); that the U.S. Congress opposed the Gulf war; and that the 1993 Clinton budget contained "an increase in beer and alcohol taxes" (it didn't),



to name only a few examples. Of course, Limbaugh has a defense for such factual lapses: He's an entertainer, not a journalist. As he told Tim Russert in 1997, "I have said very proudly that what I do is entertainment." If this is CNN's new credo, perhaps it should stop fooling around and just hire Ricky Martin.

BECOMING PRO-CHOICE: "They're trying to not let people have the choice of using our software." Sound familiar? It should: It's what competing computer executives have said about Microsoft for years. And, as federal courts have found, they were right: Microsoft crushed its competition by maintaining strict control over the icons displayed on the Windows desktop and start menu—and violated federal antitrust rules in the process. Which is what makes the above quotation from the August 13 issue of *Business Week* particularly rich. It comes, you see, from none other than Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates. After Microsoft, in response to the court rulings, agreed to allow computer makers to make changes to the "look and feel" of their upcoming Windows XP operating system, Compaq Computer Corporation struck a deal with America Online. As part of a new strategic partnership between the two companies, AOL will now appear on the Windows XP desktop that ships with all Compaq computers; the Microsoft Network, by contrast, will appear only on the start menu. Microsoft is now reportedly trying to secure from PC makers a similarly prime desktop placement for MSN. Which is no doubt what

Gates finds so distasteful: Being a monopoly is just so much easier.

REVENGE IS TRULY A DISH BEST SERVED COLD: "FEW GETTING RED HOT OVER PINK SLIPS"—*The Charlotte Observer*, August 5

"ANGRY LAID-OFF WORKERS TURN TO REVENGE"—same paper, same day

WE CAN'T IMAGINE WHY:

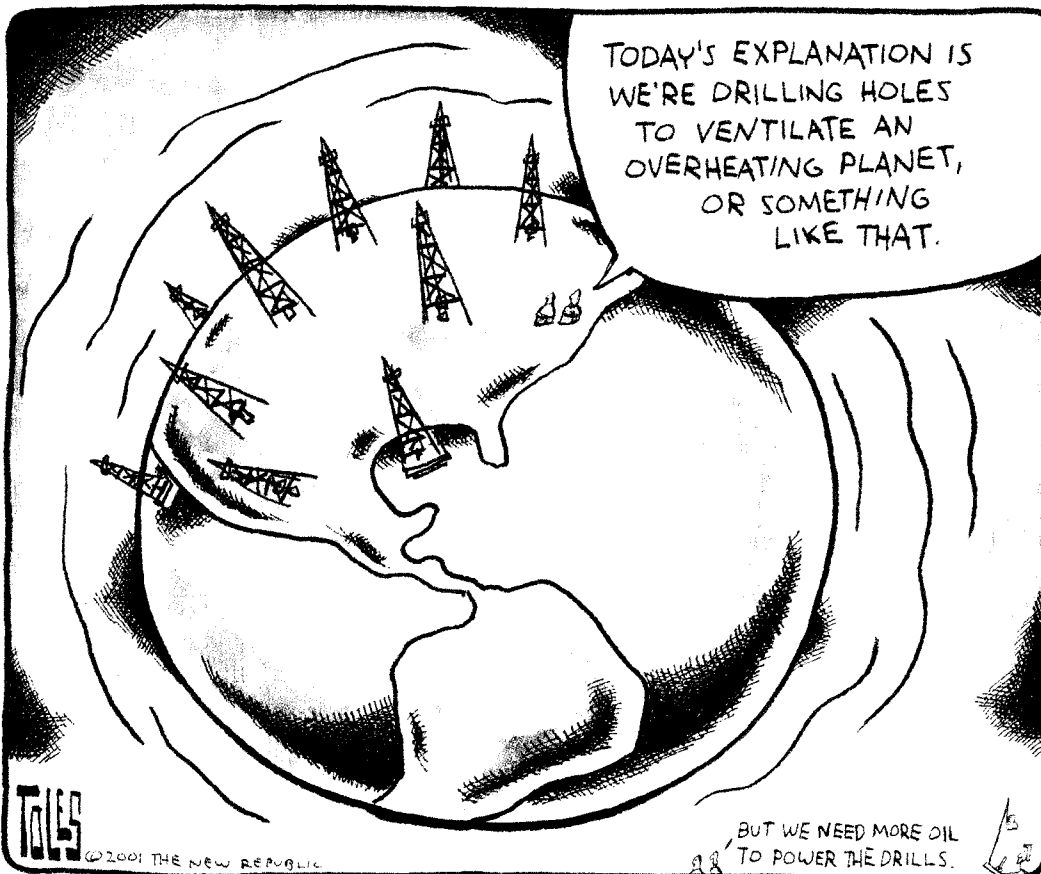
KEITH GRAVES, correspondent for Britain's Sky News: "They are very arrogant people, to my mind...."

BRIT HUME: "Is it the Israeli people or is it the government officials that you deal with?"

GRAVES: "I've been accused of being a racist for saying this, but it is the Israeli people."—"Special Report," Fox News, August 13

FIRST CAMP DAVID, NOW THIS: "Red Hot Chili Peppers have canceled their late-August concert in Israel, despite the urging of former President Bill Clinton that their presence is needed there."—Reuters, August 14

AT LAST, AN ACTIVE ROLE: "There's a lot of people in the Middle East who are desirous to get into the Mitchell process. And—but first things first. The—these terrorist acts and, you know, the responses have got to end in order for us to get the framework—the groundwork—not framework, the groundwork to discuss a framework for peace, to lay the—all right."—George W. Bush, discussing former Senator George Mitchell's report on Middle East peace, August 13 (Thanks to *Slate.com* and Michael Shively.)



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS: In Omer Bartov's article "The Anti-Hero as Hero" (August 13), Todor Zhivkov's name was misspelled. We regret the error. ■

On the Hill Before the Fall

By MICHAEL CROWLEY

A FUNNY THING happened to the Democrats after they were routed in their battle against the Bush tax cut this spring: They started to cheer up. Publicly, they continued to denounce the tax cut as unaffordable and unfair. But privately their staffers began to exude a kind of snickering satisfaction. "It's Bush's economy now," Democratic aides liked to say at the time—confident that the tax cut, like Frankenstein's monster, would soon turn on its maker.

It will—later this month. That's when the Congressional Budget Office is expected to report that this year's unified budget surplus stands at about \$160 billion, or just over half as large as the White House projected just three months ago. The slowing economy, which depresses tax revenues, has a lot to do with this. But so does the Bush tax cut. And that's what fills Democrats with glee. While \$160 billion sounds like a lot of money, almost all of it consists of surplus Medicare and Social Security dollars. That means the only way to finance popular programs like education and defense will be to take money from one or both of those equally popular entitlements.

Substantively, then, Democrats face the distinct possibility that money will be raided from their most cherished programs. But politically, they see a golden opportunity to blame Republicans for raiding money from their most cherished programs. After all, both parties have spent the past several years establishing as a sacred principle that Medicare and Social Security accounts must go untouched. And, during the tax cut debate, Democrats warned repeatedly that such a huge tax rollback would drain federal coffers and force the government to break into the Medicare or Social Security trust funds. As Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle put it last month: "I hate to say I told you so, but we told you so."

Actually, he loves saying it. Indeed, once Congress returns from recess in late August, Democrats will say "I told you so" every chance they get. Congress is supposed to pass all 13 of the government's annual spending bills before the fiscal year ends on September 30, and Democrats hope to turn the month into one long demonstration of why the Bush tax cut makes responsible governing impossible. They didn't argue that case very well when the tax cut was being debated last spring, but the appropriations process—which allows Democrats to showcase specific, unpopular trade-offs between taxes and spending—considerably strengthens their hand this time around. And Republicans know it.

The key to the Democrats' strategy is delaying the year's two most popular spending measures, education and defense, until the very end of the budget process, by which time other spending bills will likely have soaked up the available surplus. The Democrat-controlled Senate will then insist on

large appropriations for each—possibly offering to finance them by rolling back parts of Bush's tax cut or simply by demanding that Bush find another way to pay back the trust funds later.

The obvious answer would be for Bush to resist major new spending on defense or education. But he can't. Not without severe political repercussions, anyway. Not only is increased education spending hugely popular, but Senate Democrats won't pass Bush's school reform package (which is actually a separate bill) without the funding they demand. Nor can Bush simply pare down the military appropriations bill, since many conservatives already consider his proposed \$18.4 billion Pentagon spending increase meager. Whatever happens, Democrats will say the president is sacrificing important public needs to finance tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. As one House Democratic leadership aide puts it, "We're going to say, 'Your tax cut put us here. What are you going to shortchange—seniors, kids, or the military?'"

But there's no way Bush is going to accept the repeal of even part of his tax cut. And that means he'll probably have to ask Congress to break into the Medicare trust fund or (if things get bad enough) the Social Security trust fund. The White House has tried to create a few billion dollars of breathing room by arguing that the Medicare surplus is a mere accounting gimmick. But 211 House Republicans, and every GOP senator, voted earlier this year for resolutions putting Medicare off-limits for tax cuts. "We assure the American people that tax relief will not come at the expense of Medicare or Social Security," House Speaker Dennis Hastert proclaimed in February. Breaking that vow could be disastrous come Election Day 2002.

Meanwhile, Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad has begun pointing out that, according to the budget resolution passed by Congress this spring, he is "legally bound" not to authorize any extra discretionary spending that taps into the Medicare surplus. Translation: If you want to bust open the lockboxes, Mr. President, you're going to have to do so yourself. One Bush official, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, was treated to this line of argument when he called for more Pentagon spending at a committee hearing last month. Conrad asked him pointedly, "What is your proposal on how we would pay for what you're asking? Do you have specific spending cuts in other areas? Do you have revenue increases? Or do you believe we should just go ahead and use the trust funds of Social Security and Medicare?" Wolfowitz had no answer.

THE PROSPECT OF similar scenes again this fall clearly has Republicans rattled. In an interview with *The Hill* in late July, Iowa Senator Charles Grassley, the ranking Republican on the Senate Finance Committee, warned that Bush shouldn't let Democrats send him the education and defense bills last. "It's very important for the president to think out [a budget] strategy now and not wait." Bush's budget director, Mitch Daniels, has begun to do just that, insisting that Senate Democrats clear the education and defense bills sooner rather than later. "There's every reason to deal with those [bills] early in the process," Daniels says. "They're

What Do Tests Tell Us?

Bill Evers is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and a member of the Institution's Koret Task Force on K-12 Education.

One thing standardized tests can tell us is whether the grades that teachers give their students actually indicate how much the students know.

When a teacher gives a grade to a student, that grade is based not only on achievement and effort but also on what the teacher expects students in that class to know. But here a problem arises. The teacher may have rather low (or sometimes rather high) expectations for students. The teacher may not want to grade more strictly (or more leniently) than other teachers. **Grading scales may have drifted in the school so that most grades are As and Bs, without improvements in achievement.** Or, more rarely, grading scales may have drifted in the opposite direction; a C at one school may actually indicate higher achievement than a B at another school.

How hard the student has worked and where he or she is on the class curve are considerations that often figure into a teacher's grading. But they don't tell us how well the student has mastered the subject matter.

We know, for example, that in Massachusetts and Texas, teachers have been giving students much higher grades in math than those same students receive on state math tests of the same material. (For Texas, see <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/studies/correlation.pdf>.) Thus, students in Texas who have failed state tests in algebra have been given passing grades by their

teachers, especially in schools with large numbers of poor and minority students. Such grades cheat students. This is the soft bigotry of low expectations.

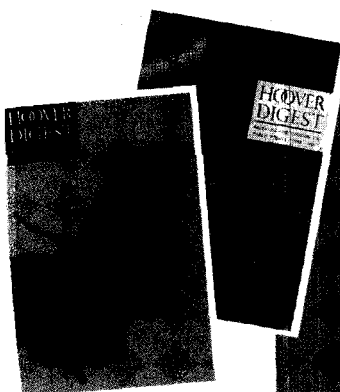
Judy Coddling, the former principal of Pasadena High School in California, tells in the opening chapter of her book *Standards for Our Schools* (coauthored by Marc Tucker) about trying to determine why her school's students were not succeeding in math. Wanting to know how much students coming into her school as freshmen knew and what classes they should be placed in, she gave them objective diagnostic tests. The "horrendous results" showed that incoming freshmen were much less prepared in math than their middle-school teachers had said that they were.

Perhaps the most amazing aspect is how the opponents of standardized tests respond. They say that the tests are wrong and that the classroom grades are right. Peter Sacks, for example, claims in his book *Standardized Minds* that the Texas state tests are invalid and that "teachers in the trenches" are accurately grading the students.

A divergence between grades from classroom teachers and scores on standardized tests can be a wake-up call for parents, taxpayers, and school boards—telling us that students don't really know the subject matter and that teachers are too soft in their grading practices. Getting rid of standardized tests is like getting rid of thermometers, X-ray machines, and blood-pressure gauges in a doctor's office.

— Bill Evers

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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the two highest priorities ... [and] they're the biggest by far... They ought to be dealt with early on, and it would be our firm intention to do that. The pattern has been to hold defense in particular to the end, and sort of paint it into a corner, and we'd like to end that kind of gamesmanship."

Daniels goes so far as to suggest that Bush might actually veto the other spending bills until Congress passes education and defense. But there are two problems with this strategy. One is that it could produce a drawn-out budget war with the Democrat-controlled Senate. ("That's crazy," says a Democratic budget aide. "We'll be in session until next year.") Budget showdowns have not been kind to Republicans in recent years, and Daniels vows, understandably, that "there won't be any government shutdown on this president's watch."

Second, because education and defense constitute two-thirds of total discretionary spending, it's not clear that simply reshuffling the order buys the Republicans much extra room in the budget. It may be less politically treacherous to cut spending on, say, foreign aid than on education, but doing so probably won't save enough money to avoid having to dip into the Medicare trust fund.

All of which means that, for many congressional Republicans, the August holiday isn't proving very restful. "It is a problem," admits a GOP appropriations aide. "Right now I don't think anyone knows what they're going to do about it. It makes people nervous when you bring it up in leadership meetings. People say 'I don't know—it's a September problem.'" Alas, September is right around the corner. ■

White House Watch Bet the Ranch

By RYAN LIZZA

IT'S THE PRESIDENT'S first year in office. He has just passed one of the biggest tax cuts in history. In August he escapes Washington for a month at his Western ranch, in the state where he served two terms as governor. His top communications adviser, worried that the long vacation is reinforcing a widespread perception of him as indolent, suggests the president spend less time on vacation. The president loses his temper. "Look," he says, "you can tell me to do a lot of things, but you're not going to tell me when to go to the ranch." It's an admirable moment: the president bucking his handler's ceaseless appetite for spin. But the handler is not Karen Hughes, it's Michael Deaver. The ranch is not Prairie Chapel in Texas, but Rancho del Cielo in California. The anecdote comes not from sources in Crawford, but from Lou Cannon's 1991 biography. And the president is not George W. Bush, but Ronald Reagan.

Unlike Bush, when Reagan went off on his August vacation, he told the world that he was, well, on vacation. The Gipper instructed his aides to tell reporters not to refer to Rancho del Cielo as the "Western White House" because the phrase connoted work rather than play. By contrast, Bush's

staff has hung an official-looking "Western White House" seal behind the press secretary's podium at the Crawford elementary school where briefings are held. In August 1981 *The Washington Post* reported that White House aides "do not pretend that the president is spending large amounts of time on government business." During one early visit when Reagan was asked if he had done any work at his ranch, he laughed and said, "Oh, sure—brought in some firewood. Got rid of some more old dead brush." Last week, by comparison, when Bush was asked about people who say his vacation is too long, he snapped, "They don't understand the definition of work, then. I'm getting a lot done."

In fact, for all the efforts to conjure Reagan, George W.'s vacationing style more closely resembles that of another recent ex-president. It was Bill Clinton who introduced the idea of vacationing politically. In 1995 Dick Morris advised him that swing voters enjoyed hiking and camping, so Clinton vacationed in Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks and slept in a tent. This is the real model for Bush's vacation. The White House is trying to use this spell away from Washington—as it has used his entire presidency—to define Bush as the un-Clinton. But it is going about it in a deeply Clintonian way.

THE VACATION SPIN started off badly, as lefty pundits pummeled the president for taking a record-long vacation while ordinary Americans were working harder and harder and while the economy was leaving fewer and fewer with the ability to take time off. So the Bushies moved aggressively to convince the press that Bush was, in fact, working like a dog—a decision they underscored with his nationally televised stem-cell decision from Crawford. The oxymoron "working vacation" entered the lexicon, and a torrent of sympathetic editorialists weighed in.

But the White House vacation spin is about more than just how hardworking Bush is. It's also about his various other virtues—virtues meant to contrast, of course, with the former vacationer-in-chief. One of those virtues, it seems, is that this president has a home. In about a minute of banter to reporters on August 7, Bush used the word half a dozen times: "It's nice to be home.... This is my home.... It's good to be home.... This is where you come home. This is my home.... I like my own home." In case anyone missed the message, the White House announced in a press release the following morning: "President Begins Home to the Heartland Tour by Building a Home" (in this case, someone else's, as part of a Habitat for Humanity project in Waco). The emphasis on home helps reinforce that—contra Clinton, who famously spent his vacations with the rich, the famous, and God knows who else—Bush is happiest with his family. "I like my house. And Laura loves it, as well," he stressed. "So we really enjoy being here." The emphasis on Crawford as home also helps Bush maintain his image as a Washington outsider, a useful persona since most of his potential 2004 Democratic opponents hail from the Senate.

By showcasing the Crawford ranch, the Bush spinmeisters hope to show voters that Bush had a life, an identity, and a home before he entered the White House. But the third point,

Palestinian War Against Jews

In recent days, Palestinian suicide bombers struck again in the heart of Israel. In the worst attack, in Jerusalem, 15 Jews were killed, including seven children, and 130 others were injured, some critically.

This was the latest in a series of targeted, brutal terrorist attacks on restaurants, discotheques, shopping malls, open-air markets, and public buses throughout Israel.

Victims have included children and the elderly, hawks and doves, the religious and secular, Israelis and foreigners.

To the perpetrators, young Palestinians, it doesn't matter who the victims are – as long as they are Israelis, as long as they are Jews.

Indoctrinated by Palestinian political and religious leaders, they have been taught that suicide attacks are the highest form of martyrdom.

They have been infused with the belief that a glorious “paradise,” including the company of virgins galore, awaits those who have killed themselves while killing Jews.

They have been assured that their families will receive generous cash payments for their sacrifice from the Palestinian Authority and from Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

Trained to kill, they have been taught to believe that the world would be a better place without Israel, without Jews.

How many more people in Israel will have to pay with their lives while Chairman Arafat fosters an atmosphere that glorifies suicide attacks?

How many more people in Israel will have to pay with their lives while Arafat fails to imprison the terrorist masterminds under his authority – and pursues a two-faced strategy of talking peace while encouraging violence?

How many more people in Israel will have to pay with their lives while Palestinian media incite hatred, Palestinian schools and camps teach the “virtues” of martyrdom, and religious leaders call for jihad?

**Palestinian leaders teach that a glorious
“paradise” awaits those who have killed
themselves while killing Jews.**

And how many more people in Israel will have to pay with their lives while the world overlooks Israel's outstretched hand of peace that could have laid the foundation for an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, only to be rebuffed by Arafat, who, once again, refused to say “yes” to peace?



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at least, is certainly untrue. The Crawford ranch does not precede Bush's life on the national stage; it is a product of it. When Bush was just governor of Texas, he didn't have the ranch—it was bought two years ago, with his presidential campaign at full steam. Before then, he lived in the governor's mansion and spent vacations at a home he owned at a members-only lakeside retreat in East Texas called the Rainbo Club, which caters to the Dallas elite. His other holiday destinations were the Bush family compound in Kennebunkport, Maine, which did so much to identify his father as an aloof preppy, and the Gasparilla Inn, a luxurious Florida hideaway owned by an heir to the DuPonts, where the Bush family went after the Florida recount. As one Texas newspaper noted back when Bush purchased his ranch, "Mr. Bush has no roots in the area." But after seven trips there as president, Bush has most of the national press convinced that he was practically born and bred in Crawford. It's a great political feat.

BUSH AIDES WANT the vacation to say something else about the president, too—something they fear has been obscured in recent months: that he's a compassionate conservative. Part of this means showing Bush as an outdoorsman and thus, presumably, an environmentalist. So Friday, the president took ABC's Claire Shipman on a tour of his favorite hiking destination. Then, on Tuesday, he took a side trip to Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado. (All Bush's side trips are to swing states or states with key Senate races.)

It also means showcasing the president's passion for "values." In a five-minute speech last Monday, Bush mentioned "the values that have made this country unique and different," "values of love of family, values of respect for nature.... values in understanding that there's some things beyond our control.... values of hard work; values of the entrepreneurial spirit; and values of private property. These are really important values." Neighbors are important, too. In the same speech, the president extolled the "concept of neighborliness in Crawford." He likes it when people walk up to him and say, "I'm your neighbor," because "a neighbor means more than just somebody living next door to somebody else"—a good thing since his closest Texas neighbor is miles away—"a neighbor means that there's somebody around willing to help somebody." The president likes it when people "find a neighbor" and "are willing to help that neighbor" because "you can't pass a law that says 'thou shalt love thy neighbor' or 'you will be neighborly.'" Anyway, Bush concluded, before signing an agricultural appropriations bill in front of several locals seated, rustically, atop bales of hay, "I want to welcome my neighbors."

The following day, Bush rounded out his message with another key element: "character." In less than 20 minutes, the president got in eleven mentions of character ("the character of our citizens," "communities of character," and so on) as well as tossing in another nine mentions of values. Finally, artfully combining the concepts, he praised America as "a nation of character and values" and the Rocky Mountain National Park YMCA picnic as "a place that teaches values, that heralds character."

The mind-numbing repetition is a hallmark of Karen Hughes's communications shop, which has learned well from

its predecessor. And the repetition works. The headlines in the next day's *New York Times* and most other major papers had "Bush" juxtaposed with "values." In *The Washington Post*, the White House scored a triple: "environment," "values," and "character" all next to "Bush." Most articles gently mocked the spin, but this too was presaged by the Clintonites: As Dick Morris used to say, "Even if they joke about it, they'll have to write [about it]." In fact, amazing as it sounds, the Bushies aren't just proving *as* politically savvy about presidential vacations as their predecessors; they're proving *more* savvy. When Clinton returned from that camping trip in 1995, he called Morris in a rage. "That's the first vacation I've taken that didn't help me in the polls," he complained. "After all my *other* vacations, I've always risen a point or two." And the latest Gallup Poll, taken about halfway through W.'s Crawford holiday? It puts the president's job-approval rating at 57 percent—up two points. ■

The White House hides history. Cover Letter

By JOSH CHAFETZ

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION has something of a love affair with secrecy. First, there was Karl Rove's closed-door meeting with Intel executives while he still held more than \$100,000 of the company's stock. Then there were the White House's secret negotiations with the Salvation Army over the faith-based initiative. And let's not forget the administration's refusal to comply with a General Accounting Office demand to turn over information about Vice President Dick Cheney's hush-hush energy task force (see "Go Away," by Ryan Lizza, *TNR*, July 9 & 16).

But all this stonewalling pales in comparison with a much lower-profile White House stiff-arm: For seven months, the administration has prevented the National Archives from releasing 68,000 pages of Ronald Reagan's correspondence with his top presidential aides—correspondence due for release on George W. Bush's Inauguration Day. Why is this case of stonewalling worse than the others? Because, in this case, the Bushies aren't just guilty of poor judgment and suspect ethics. They're probably violating the law.

In the wake of Watergate, Congress passed, and Presidents Ford and Carter signed into law, a number of reforms designed to ensure government openness. Among them was the Presidential Records Act (PRA), which allows an outgoing president to specify a period of time after he leaves office, up to twelve years, during which access to six categories of presidential papers will remain restricted. The legislation also charges the National Archives with "an affirmative duty to make such records available to the public as rapidly and completely as possible consistent with the provisions of this Act."

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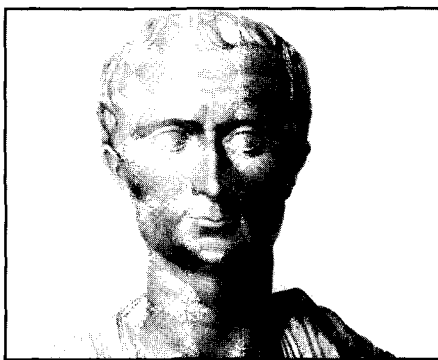
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GARRETT G. FAGAN (Ph.D., McMaster University, 1993) is associate professor of history at the Pennsylvania State University in State College. A native of Dublin, Ireland, he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees at Trinity College, Dublin, and was a Killam Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of British Columbia. Before joining the faculty at Penn State, he held teaching posts at McMaster University and York University in Canada, and at the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill and Davidson College. Students at every institution consistently offered high praise for his courses in ancient history.

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Perhaps realizing he was the first president to whom the law would apply, Reagan issued a final executive order two days before he left office: It required that both the current and former president be given 30 days' notice before the release of any presidential papers. During that time, the current or former administration could demand further delays to check for any documents that might fall under executive privilege. (The National Archives already removes all documents that fall under the national security and personal privacy exemptions before it sends the rest on to the White House.)

January 20, the day Bush took the oath of office, marked the end of Reagan's twelve-year grace period. On February 28, the National Archives sent to the White House a 29-page letter describing 37,000 of the more than 68,000 pages of "P5" documents. The P5 category of papers, specified under the PRA, comprises confidential advice between the president and his top advisers. In Reagan's case, that means everything from correspondence with Attorney General Edwin Meese III about controversial affirmative action decisions to memos with Interior Secretary James Watt on environmental policy.

But White House counsel Alberto Gonzales forbade the National Archives from releasing the documents. Instead he ordered a 90-day extension until June 21. Then, on June 6, he ordered a second extension, this time until August 31. So, almost seven months after they were due to be made public, the documents remain sealed in a vault in the Reagan Library in Simi Valley, California. Historians say that if the White House delays again, they may go to court.

AND IF THEY DO, they'll probably win. To justify its stalling, the White House cites Reagan's executive order, which it claims authorizes such delays in order to check for documents that fall under the executive privilege exemption. But this argument is highly problematic: An executive order designed to implement a law cannot authorize government officials to *violate* that law. After all, the PRA, passed by Congress and signed by the president, is, in the words of the Constitution, "supreme Law of the Land." An executive order is not. Otherwise, the president could do an end run around the legislative process whenever he wanted. In this case, the law clearly says that the papers may be kept secret for a period not to exceed twelve years, absent a successful claim of executive privilege. Should the president choose a period shorter than twelve years, that president or the current one could use Reagan's executive order to extend it, up to the legal limit. But in this case, since no claim of executive privilege has yet been asserted, and since the twelve years are up, the government is in violation of the law.

The other problem with the administration's claim—that it is holding up the release of documents as it searches for privileged material—is that it's simply not true. In June, White House spokeswoman Anne Womack told *The Washington Post*, "We are proceeding with a thorough legal review of all the documents to ensure that the Presidential Records Act is implemented correctly." But now both Womack and the National Archives acknowledge that the White House is not, in fact, reviewing the documents *at all*. Sharon Fawcett,

deputy assistant archivist for presidential libraries at the National Archives, admits that what the White House is really doing is reviewing the wisdom of the PRA itself, an assertion Womack does not deny. The decision to make these papers available after twelve years, Fawcett says, "was made twenty-two years ago, and the question is whether there are ways to open up that decision for another look." But there is a constitutionally prescribed process by which laws are opened up for "another look," and unilateral action by the executive branch is not it. The only way for this law—or any other one—to be repealed is for Congress to pass another law repealing it.

FINALLY, THE IDEA that a sitting president can assert executive privilege on behalf of a former president is constitutionally shaky. Stanley Kutler, the University of Wisconsin at Madison professor of history and law who sued to open the Nixon tapes, argues that "[e]xecutive privilege does not extend to those people [who are] not executives." Edward Gleiman, who, as a staffer on the House Government Information Subcommittee, helped draft the PRA, concurs: "I don't think it was our expectation that presidents, one after another, could assert executive privilege and keep the bulk of records from a former president closed."

Perhaps recognizing the weakness of its legal claim, the White House has resorted to a political argument: that opening records after only twelve years could deter advisers from giving honest and open advice to the president. But when I put this concern to George Shultz, Reagan's secretary of state, he replied, "At least for me, I was never conscious of [the PRA]. It was never in my mind at all." Meese echoes those sentiments almost word for word: "I don't think [the PRA] came to mind very often, if at all."

As the August 31 deadline approaches, rumors are flying about the real reason the documents remain under lock and key. Joanne Drake, President Reagan's current chief of staff, confirms that no one in Reagan's office requested the delay—the impetus came purely from the Bush White House. "We're a little frustrated," says an official at the Reagan Library under orders "from Washington" not to talk to the press. In fact, far from objecting to the release of the papers, former Reagan officials are practically demanding it. Shultz says it often "seems impossible to get [documents] declassified, and it's ridiculous." Meese agrees that "twelve years is certainly a reasonable amount of time." James Pinkerton, an aide in the Reagan and Bush I administrations, worries that a much longer delay will make it look like the United States has passed an "Official Secrets Act."

So who does that leave? Some suggest that President Bush is trying to protect former Reagan officials now serving in his administration—Secretary of State Colin Powell, Budget Director Mitchell Daniels Jr., chief economist Lawrence Lindsey, and Chief of Staff Andrew Card. But this seems unlikely: Shultz says that "people shouldn't overestimate the importance" of the documents, since Reagan advisers discussed the most sensitive topics face-to-face, an assertion Meese confirms. In fact, Bush may be worried less about the release of this current batch of documents than about future

batches. After all, the documents from Bush I—an administration known for putting more down on paper—are scheduled to be opened in 2005. Perhaps the president is asserting a different kind of privilege altogether—not executive but familial. ■

The Treasury coddles tax cheats.

Saved Havens

By ANAND GIRIDHARADAS

EVERY YEAR SEVERAL thousand people—no one knows how many, for obvious reasons—park their wealth in offshore tax havens. Some are criminals laundering ill-gotten treasure; others are wealthy individuals or corporate moguls hiding their riches from taxation, often illegally. The common parlance for such people is “tax cheats.”

But Daniel Mitchell, a senior economist at the Heritage Foundation, sees them differently. To him, these IRS evaders are noble icons of civil disobedience. Clad in a seersucker suit and black suspenders, he explains over lunch on Capitol Hill why he could not “personally condemn any family that deposits their assets offshore in the face of a confiscatory tax like the death tax, any more than I would condemn Rosa Parks for sitting in the front of that bus.” Reminded that such taxes, right or wrong, are the law, enacted by democratically elected bodies, he retorts that democratically elected bodies brought Hitler to power.

It would be tempting to dismiss this defense of tax havens as the rant of an ideological crusader, which Mitchell certainly is, or as the self-interested rationalization of a slick lobbyist, which he is as well. But it would be wrong, because with little public notice—and thanks in large part to Mitchell’s own diligence—the coddling of tax cheats has effectively become the Bush administration’s position too.

From Aruba in the Caribbean to Vanuatu in the South Pacific, tax havens lure foreign companies and wealthy individuals with the promise of little or no taxation and privacy laws that keep out foreign tax collectors. Some estimates attribute to them one-quarter of the globe’s assets—a startling figure, since the 60 or so tax havens worldwide house about 1 percent of the world’s population. In 1998 the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development—a club of 30 free-market democracies including the United States and most of Europe—proposed an international effort to crack down on 35 of the most egregious havens. The OECD’s demands were modest. It asked the havens to share data on foreign nationals upon request. It also requested that they no longer apply different rates to foreigners and locals—a fiscal sleight of hand by which the havens keep their own tax revenues at a reasonable level even

as they drain other nations’ treasuries. Countries that refused to comply would face sanctions, effectively straining their ties to the global capital network.

The OECD plan drew enthusiastic approval from the Clinton administration. And early indications from the Bush Treasury Department suggested that American support for the initiative would continue. In mid-February the G-7 finance ministers met in Palermo, Italy. The new Treasury secretary, Paul O’Neill, voiced concerns that the OECD might impinge on sovereign nations’ tax policies, but he quietly endorsed its efforts nonetheless. An official communiqué, drafted by Italy but approved by consensus, praised the OECD and urged it to stamp out “harmful tax practices.”

But even before George W. Bush took office, a coalition of anti-tax libertarians, tax cheats, and corporate interests that profit from offshore banking launched a campaign to change the administration’s mind. At the forefront was a lobby shop called the Center for Freedom and Prosperity, run by Mitchell and Andrew Quinlan (a former congressional aide who once represented customers of Swiss banks), and funded in part by the trade associations of financial services firms that profit from haven activity. (The CFP refuses to provide details on its contributors.)

Mitchell and Quinlan deployed three principal arguments. Their first claim was that the OECD’s crackdown would interfere with the free market. Different tax rates in Bermuda and Bolivia, they argued, are like different prices at Sears and Saks; they fuel competition and keep suppliers (of clothes or government services) from overcharging. This argument, however, has a flaw: Stores, like states, compete to offer their citizens not just low prices (taxes) but also quality goods (public services). But offshore tax havens let you pay taxes in Aruba while enjoying the public services of the United States. To extend the analogy, it is like paying Sears prices for the coat you got at Saks. The result hardly resembles a functioning market.

Mitchell and Quinlan’s second claim was that the OECD had a hidden agenda to “harmonize” world tax rates. The OECD, they insisted, would force the Cayman Islands to raise its taxes; then it would pressure the United States to raise its rates to European levels. “If I’m a greedy tax collector,” Mitchell explains, “my first goal is to take that camel’s nose and pull the whole camel into the tent.” Thirdly, CFP allies crafted a catchy sound bite to stoke concerns about the privacy of individuals’ financial records, warning ominously of the “global tax police.”

In reality, of course, the OECD contemplated nothing remotely like this. Its most far-reaching proposal was for tax havens to equalize their tax structures *internally*—that is, to impose the same tax rates on their own citizens as on foreigners. It had no plans for tax equalization externally. The “global tax police” was part paranoia, part consciously dishonest lobbying pitch. But that didn’t stop it from reverberating through the echo chamber of the conservative punditry. By firing off e-mails to sympathetic writers, the CFP successfully planted its arguments in an April 19 Robert Novak column and in the April 23 edition of *National Review Online*. In January, Mitchell made his case directly on the op-ed page of *The Wall Street Journal*.

BUT MITCHELL AND QUINLAN'S most important work took place behind closed doors. The CFP knew that the Treasury Department's career officials were hardwired to pursue and punish tax cheats—who cost the United States \$70 billion per year in lost revenues—and were inclined to regard the OECD as a useful ally in that effort. So the lobbyists focused on the incoming Republican political appointees, whom they hoped might have a competing ideological inclination to applaud low tax rates and financial privacy.

The campaign took off on February 6, when Don Nickles, the second-ranking Senate Republican, wrote a letter urging O'Neill to spurn the OECD. Though the note was signed "Don" and included a handwritten "Thanks for your attention on this," its text had been drafted by the CFP. In a follow-up session several weeks later, CFP lobbyists—including Mitchell and Quinlan—made their pitch to a half-dozen Treasury officials in the office of Mark Weinberger, the department's chief tax official and a new Bush appointee. Later that month, a handful of CFP lobbyists saw Weinberger during a breakfast at the posh Hay-Adams Hotel, a fixture of official Washington across the street from the White House. They walked him back to the Treasury building, peddling their arguments. "Mark wasn't saying a whole lot," one recalled. "He had probably listened to some of the career people, who liked their junkets to Paris"—the home of the OECD. "Initially," the lobbyist said, "the feeling was he has to be brought up to speed." Indeed, as late as March 26, Weinberger was still toeing the Clinton line on tax havens. In a letter responding to Nickles, he argued forcefully against tax evasion. "Countries generally should not engage in practices that make it easier for other countries' laws to be broken or frustrated," he wrote.

But the CFP kept coming, booking further meetings with officials at Treasury and the White House. There were sessions with department bureaucrats as well as with political hands like Glenn Hubbard, chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers; Lawrence Lindsey, the administration's economics guru; and Cesar Conda, domestic policy adviser to Vice President Dick Cheney. "A lot of this is just old friends and things. These aren't formal sit-downs," said one well-heeled tax-haven defender who sought out longtime pals and former employees now in the Bush administration. The key, the lobbyist added, was "making them know there's a deadline, making sure they talk to Treasury."

At the CFP's instigation, some five dozen lawmakers lobbied O'Neill, including Capitol Hill power brokers such as Nickles, House Majority Leader Dick Armey, and House Majority Whip Tom DeLay. Conservative luminaries like Milton Friedman and James Buchanan, both Nobel laureates in economics, also weighed in. Most strikingly, on March 14, after laborious persuasion, 26 members of the Congressional Black Caucus—including staunch liberals like Charles Rangel and Maxine Waters—were enlisted, because of their affinity for the Caribbean, to sign a letter drafted by the CFP condemning the OECD.

Then, in mid-April, the lobbying effort came to a head. O'Neill had a tête-à-tête with Ed Feulner, the founder and president of Heritage, in the conference room outside the

secretary's third-floor office. For more than an hour, Feulner pressed his case on a range of issues—including the OECD campaign against tax havens. "When you have people like Ed Feulner say, 'Listen to this,' they probably pay attention," one of the CFP's lobbyists said.

The attention began paying off in late April when O'Neill again met with the G-7 finance ministers—in Washington. The meeting's communiqué, drafted by the Americans, contained a telling omission: The ministers did not endorse the OECD tax-haven plan. The CFP was elated. "We celebrated," recalls Quinlan. But O'Neill was slated to formally announce the U.S. position at an OECD meeting in Paris three weeks later. "We heard rumors that the OECD was going to try to put language that the U.S. was still behind the OECD," Quinlan said. "We got more involved because we wanted to make sure that was not true."

SURE ENOUGH, ON May 10, just days before the OECD's annual meeting, O'Neill wrote an op-ed in *The Washington Times* declaring that he had "cause to reevaluate" the anti-tax-haven drive. It was important, he wrote, not to "tolerate those who cheat on their U.S. taxes by hiding behind a cloak of secrecy." But, mimicking the CFP's language, he added that it was not important—it was, in fact, repugnant—to "harmonize world tax systems." He said he was "troubled by the underlying premise that low tax rates are somehow suspect and by the notion that any country, or group of countries, should interfere in any other country's decision about how to structure its own tax system." Once again, the lobbyists cheered. O'Neill's op-ed was "a ten on our scale," Quinlan gushed. "Right now, we have eighty percent of what we wanted. When they took over, we had nothing."

Cries of outrage, at home and abroad, prodded O'Neill to temper his anti-OECD rhetoric. On Capitol Hill, Democrats blasted the administration for looking the other way as tax cheats leached the government. Senator Carl Levin, a Michigan Democrat who chairs the governmental affairs subcommittee on investigations, asked O'Neill, in a June 29 letter, to share his views on tax havens with the panel. Three weeks later, his message honed, the secretary told senators that his oath of office made the enforcement of tax law his top duty. He spoke glowingly of information exchange—so long as it is case-specific and not a "fishing expedition." But, deeper into his testimony, O'Neill acknowledged that he had convinced the OECD to gut much of its agenda. Tax havens would no longer face pressure to apply the same tax rates to foreigners and locals. And, most important, the imposition of any sanctions—which O'Neill called "measures of last resort"—would be delayed by two years or more.

For the foreseeable future, at least, tax havens are safe. And Mitchell and Quinlan are happy to take credit. "Andy and I bitched and whined a lot," Mitchell says, "and members of Congress made their opinions known, and a bunch of free-market guys made their opinions known." Quinlan agrees: "I would say without a doubt that if it wasn't for the CFP beating the drum for seven months... we wouldn't be where we are today." Rosa Parks would be so proud. ■

How soaps are integrating America.

Color TV

By MICHELLE COTTLE

LOVEBIRDS MIGUEL AND CHARITY (who happens to be a witch) watch in horror as the smoke from a burning boat begins to suffocate Tabitha (also a witch) and Timmy (her enchanted doll), trapped inside. In the shadows nearby, the deranged arsonist, Norma, babbles to herself about her triumph but frets that someone will try to save the imperiled duo. Meanwhile, at a posh resort in Bermuda, the filthy-rich and utterly wicked Julian Crane is attempting to seduce the beautiful, naïve, and thoroughly inebriated Theresa, unbeknownst to Theresa's older brother Luis, who, as fate would have it, is in the adjacent suite sharing a romantic evening with his true love, Sheridan, who is also Julian's sister (and whom Julian and his father, Alistair, are plotting to kill in order to end her relationship with Luis). Julian is supposed to be using his Bermuda trip to divorce Ivy, who at that very moment is back in (the fictional New England town of) Harmony, eavesdropping on Sam (the object of her affections), Grace (Sam's wife), and David, who claims that Grace has long been *his* wife.

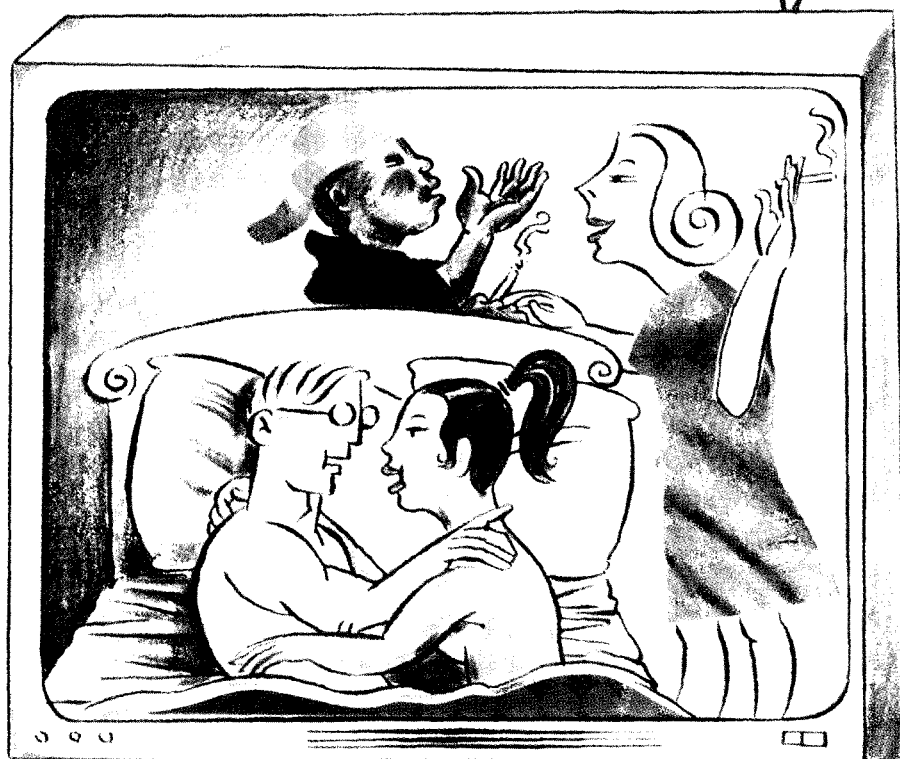
Viewers got all this—and much, much more—in last Thursday's episode of "Passions," NBC's newest, hippest, weirdest daytime drama. Just over two years old and geared toward younger viewers, "Passions" is a bit more campy than its elder brethren but still delivers pretty much what you'd expect from a soap opera: poor production values, absurd plotlines, gorgeous cast members, and wretched acting. With all the scheming, screwing, and attempted killing that go on, soaps could be Exhibit A in Bill Bennett's case that television is turning America into a modern-day Sodom.

Except that when it comes to race, the soaps are a shining model of what America claims it wants to be: diverse, integrated, and more or less equal. While activists continue to grumble about the bland whiteness of prime-time television, the big-three networks—in a bid to pump up sagging ratings—have begun a major push to lure minority viewers, particularly Latinos, to their daytime dramas. The result is Spanish simulcasts and subtitles, story lines that deal with Hispanic culture, and more Latino faces on-screen. Moreover, unlike prime time,

when blacks and Latinos tend to appear in segregated shows (think Damon Wayans) or stereotypical roles (think Latina maids), the minorities in soaps are folded into integrated, middle-class (not to mention upper-class) story lines. On "daytime," African Americans, Hispanics, Caucasians, and enchanted dolls all live, love, lie, and forgive together in a melodramatic melting pot. It's enough to make you put down your vacuum cleaner, buy a box of Kleenex, and stand up and cheer.

Make no mistake: The integration of daytime television is primarily about the pursuit of green. Over the past decade, with more women working outside the home, soap operas have suffered a ratings slump. (Industry execs also blame the O.J. trial for preempting the soaps and breaking fans' viewing habits.) Even the most popular show, "The Young and the Restless," has suffered a 28 percent ratings slide since 1994. To make matters worse, the average age of soap viewers is on the rise, up nine years since 1991, which bodes ill for ad revenues. (Younger viewers tend to be freer with their spending.) All of which has sent daytime TV execs scrambling.

For a variety of reasons, Latinos are a prime target. For starters, the raw numbers are mouthwatering: According to the 2000 census, there are some 35 million Hispanics living in the United States—and market research shows that young Latinos tend to spend more of their disposable income than their non-Latino counterparts. Best of all, many Latinos (or, more often, Latinas) already have a taste for the genre. *Telenovelas*, Spanish-language soap operas, are a staple of Spanish-language television and are extraordinarily popular among Hispanics in the United States. Soap producers are praying that, with a little strategic tweaking, they can get *telenovela* fans hooked.



Most basically, much daytime programming now offers Spanish subtitles or optional Spanish audio. In addition, many soaps' websites include show summaries and star bios *en español*. More significantly, some shows are mimicking the format of *telenovelas*, which feature faster-paced story lines that wrap up after several weeks or months, instead of dragging on for years like traditional soaps. CBS executives hold regular meetings on how to use elements from the *telenovelas* to draw Latino audiences to "The Bold and the Beautiful," says publicist Kevin McDonald. ABC has already adopted the *telenovela* format on "Port Charles" and, earlier this summer, brought in a Latino consulting company to help develop plotlines and characters that appeal to Hispanic viewers. An added bonus, notes Felicia Behr, the network's senior vice president for daytime programming, is that the *telenovela's* faster pace appeals to young people, who like to "get conclusions" after a few weeks. Over the past few weeks, says Behr, numbers for "Port Charles" among women in the key 18-to-49 age range rose 36 percent, while its numbers among teens tripled.

The most obvious change, however, is in front of the camera: more Latino faces, particularly in central roles. Behr reports that ABC recently introduced another Hispanic character on "All My Children" and expanded the Hispanic family on "One Life to Live," keeping them "at the forefront of the story for a long time." In May, CBS added an Argentinean and a Colombian cast member to star, respectively, as a fashion model and a fashion designer—no blue-collar laborers here—on "The Bold and the Beautiful" (or, if you prefer, "*Belleza y Poder*"). But leading the multicultural charge is NBC's "Passions": Of its four core families, two are white, one is black, and one is Hispanic. (Hispanic-Irish, to be more precise. Intermarriage—while still rare on prime time—is becoming de rigueur in soap land.) The yummy Lopez-Fitzgerald brothers have developed quite a fan club, with young Miguel (Jesse Metcalfe) named AOL's Teen Celebrity of the Month in August. And when two older members of the Lopez-Fitzgerald clan were planning for a double wedding in July, the writers recruited the hottest talk-show host on Spanish-language television to guest star as a visiting aunt; her husband was played by a veteran *telenovela* actor.

A FEW LATINO FACES here and there may not sound like much, until you consider their stark absence during prime time. Although the census shows that Hispanics now make up 12.5 percent of the U.S. population, they represent only 2 percent of characters in prime time, according to the California-based advocacy group Children Now. African Americans fare somewhat better, in part because of a high-profile boycott threat last year by the NAACP. Nonetheless, of the 22 shows premiering this season, only two had minority leads.

Worse, unlike the assimilationist soaps, prime-time programming frequently pursues segregation as a marketing strategy. The vast majority of sitcoms boast either all-white or all-black casts—and leave Latinos completely out of the picture. (Weekly dramas do a better job—think Detective Ed

Green on "Law & Order" or Dr. Peter Benton on "ER"—but mainly after ten o'clock in the evening. As Children Now points out, during the earlier hours, when most kids are watching, the world looks like a very segregated place.) Soaps, by contrast, try not to ghettoize minority characters in marginal or stereotypical roles. For the most part, they manage to acknowledge their characters' Latino heritage without treating them differently from other characters, says Felix Sanchez, CEO of the p.r. firm TerraCom and a founder of the National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts. "Daytime at least identifies characters as Latinos and allows them to fall into the same classic soap opera character traps."

It's true, of course, that the TV culture into which Latinos are being assimilated is a culture of schlock. But soap opera role models are better than no televised role models at all. Moreover, the soaps—which have long served as a farm system for prime time—also give young Latino actors, writers, and directors a foot in the network door. The list of soap actors turned megastars is long and distinguished, including Meg Ryan, Demi Moore, Tommy Lee Jones, Alec Baldwin, Dustin Hoffman, Christopher Reeve, and Puerto Rican pop-music phenom Ricky Martin. Seven years ago, Martin was hamming it up on "General Hospital" as singing bartender Miguel Morez. Today, he's living *la... Well, you get the picture. Viva la revolución.* ■

Why Fernando Ferrer is losing. Bronx Trail

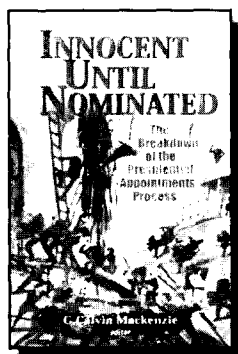
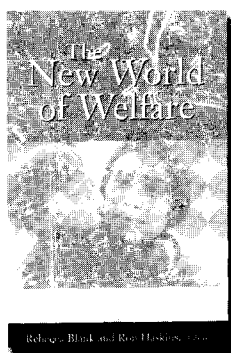
By NOAM SCHEIBER

EVEN FOR A candidate who claims to represent "the other New York," this Brooklyn neighborhood makes for an unlikely campaign stop. The wide avenues have a desolate, bombed-out feel, and on this Saturday afternoon the storefronts are mostly either shuttered or boarded up. I'm told this is where the unrelentingly bleak 1989 movie *Last Exit to Brooklyn* was filmed. It's not hard to imagine why.

Still, to Fernando Ferrer, current Bronx borough president and one of four Democrats competing in next month's mayoral primary, Sunset Park does have at least one thing to recommend it: the Metropolitan Detention Center, which for the last 90 days has housed self-appointed Gotham kingmaker Al Sharpton. As Ferrer pulls up in his standard-issue black sedan, about 40 raggedy Sharpton sympathizers are wrapping up their weekly protest. But Ferrer hasn't come to demonstrate. In stark contrast to the activists, he sports a crisp blue blazer, khaki slacks, and his trademark tortoiseshell glasses; his egg-shaped head and bemused expression make him look a little like a Latino Jon Lovitz. Seemingly oblivious to the chanting behind him (*No Justice, No Peace!*; *Free Reverend Al, Let Him Go!*), Ferrer takes a handful of

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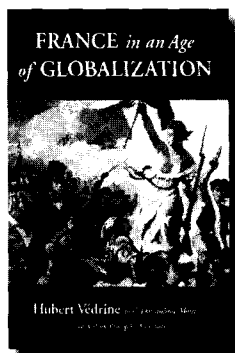
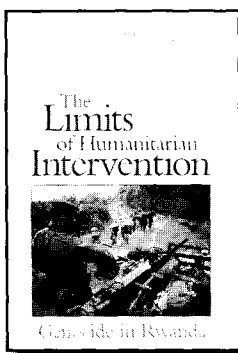
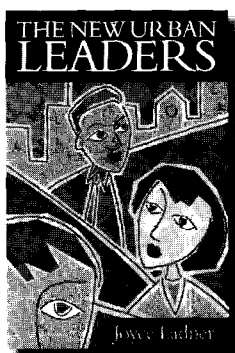


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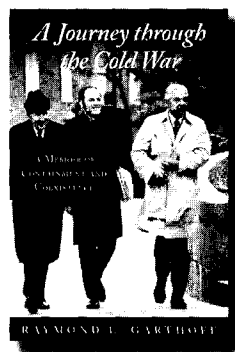
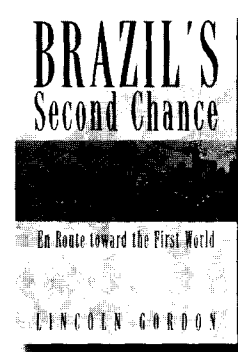
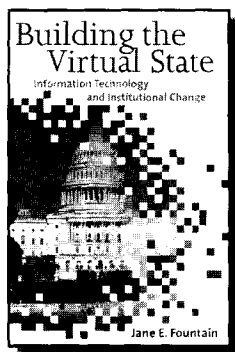
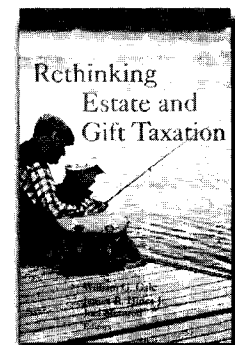
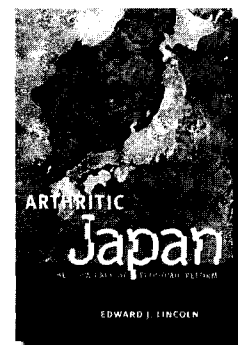
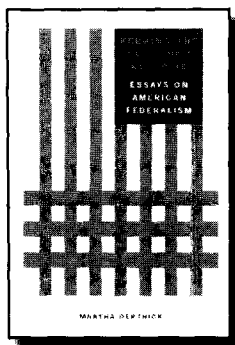
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questions from reporters. After a few more minutes, he excuses himself, makes his way across the parking lot, and disappears into the prison. Two hours later he's still inside.

When Ferrer first entered the mayoral race, it would have been hard to imagine him canceling an afternoon of events less than a month before the primary to chat up a cell-bound Sharpton. Ferrer's candidacy was to have been a window onto the future of urban politics, evidence of a new black-brown coalition invigorated by the Hispanic demographic boom. "The racial breakdown of the current Democratic field clearly represents a huge advantage for Ferrer, if race actually is—or, at least, can be made to seem—the central issue," wrote an enthused *New Yorker*. But so far neither half of the hoped-for racial coalition has seen it that way. African American support is dispersed among the Democratic candidates, with a plurality backing the white front-runner, Public Advocate Mark Green. And, even among Latinos, Ferrer's support is tepid—particularly outside his Bronx, Puerto Rican political base. As a result, recent polls put Ferrer in the second tier of candidates, his support hovering between 14 percent and 19 percent of registered Democrats.

So, somewhat perversely in a campaign premised on a grassroots coalition, Ferrer seems to have forsaken grassroots campaigning. Instead, he spends much of his time pleading for endorsements from Sharpton, Harlem Representative Charlie Rangel, and a host of other black New York leaders. It's not a good sign.

In retrospect, forming a black-brown coalition in New York City was probably unrealistic from the get-go. One reason is competition for political spoils. In the last ten years, Hispanics (once overwhelmingly Puerto Rican but recently bolstered by an influx of Dominicans and South and Central Americans) have replaced African Americans as the city's largest minority group. But, although Hispanics now make up 27 percent of the city's population, they still hold only around 15 percent of government jobs, compared with over 35 percent for blacks. And some African Americans fear that a Latino mayor could change those figures quickly. So, as in Los Angeles—where African Americans overwhelmingly supported white City Attorney James Hahn over Mexican-American State Assembly Speaker Antonio Villaraigosa—black support for a white candidate like Green may simply be an attempt to preserve the politi-

cal and patronage status quo.

In fact, black leaders have tended to perceive Hispanics as a political threat for almost four decades now. The tension dates from at least 1961, when a young Puerto Rican politician named Herman Badillo ran as a reformist candidate for district leader in East Harlem. Though Badillo tried to characterize himself as a reformer who just happened to be Latino, his bid to overthrow an Italian- and African-American-dominated local machine had obvious racial overtones. When the machine engineered his defeat, some Hispanics cried foul.

In the years that followed, relations between blacks and Hispanics, led primarily by Badillo, remained fraught. In 1977 Badillo entered a crowded Democratic primary for mayor, complicating the campaign of Manhattan Borough President Percy Sutton, the lone African American in the field. Though each man finished too far out of the running to blame the other for his performance, many blacks were convinced that Sutton had been wronged. Eight years later, when Badillo emerged as the consensus minority candidate to challenge then-Mayor Ed Koch, a coalition of African American leaders, including Sutton and future Mayor David Dinkins, drafted political cipher Denny Farrell to challenge him. Hispanics sensed a political payback, and Badillo subsequently lost to Koch in the primary.

The exception to New York's history of black-brown



political noncooperation came in 1989, when Hispanics, alienated by incumbent Koch's increasingly autocratic style, rallied behind Dinkins's successful effort to topple him. In that case, as in Dinkins's reelection bid against Rudolph Giuliani four years later, Hispanics backed the more liberal candidate, who happened to be black. Yet such clear ideological choices are rare. While it is undeniably true that both Hispanics and African Americans fall on the left of New York's political spectrum, most New York City elections offer multiple left-leaning candidates. And with ideology less important, parochial competition tends to divide the two communities.

JUST ASK FERRER. Despite his campaign's early biracial promise, as of late July Ferrer had failed to break 20 percent in opinion polls among African Americans, putting him roughly even with City Comptroller Alan Hevesi and City Council Speaker Peter Vallone (neither of whom are known as champions of African American causes) and well behind Green, who polls around 30 percent. Nor has Ferrer done much better among the black political elite. Green picked up the coveted Dinkins endorsement in mid-May and this week added that of influential Harlem minister Calvin Butts. Hevesi, meanwhile, has won the backing of former Queens Representative Floyd Flake, the Guardians (a fraternal order of black police), and Abner Louima, the Haitian immigrant assaulted by New York police four years ago.

Some of Ferrer's difficulties in attracting black support are beyond his control. For example, Green spent his eight years as public advocate denouncing Giuliani at every turn—a record that won him credibility among African Americans. And Green probably would have won Dinkins's endorsement no matter what—since he served as the former mayor's consumer affairs commissioner, whereas Ferrer once sued Dinkins over what he claimed was the mayor's illegal use of a Bronx motel to house the city's homeless. But Ferrer didn't exactly help his cause at a mayoral debate in May. Asked which of the city's three most recent mayors he would vote for if they were running this year—Koch, Dinkins, or Giuliani—Ferrer hemmed and hawed, until the moderator finally moved on. He spent the next day insisting he'd been cut off before he could fully respond. But Dinkins told the *New York Daily News* that it "sounded like Freddy avoided answering" the question—and endorsed Green the following week.

To be fair, Ferrer isn't totally out of the endorsement game. He secured the backing of State Comptroller Carl McCall early in the campaign. And there were reports Saturday that a coalition of black Manhattan Democrats, led by Rangel and Borough President Virginia Fields, were warming to the idea of a black-brown alliance (read: eager to hold off Hispanic challengers in their increasingly Latino jurisdictions), and might soon make an endorsement of their own. Then, of course, there's Sharpton, who has drawn more than 100,000 (overwhelmingly African American) votes during his various campaigns. The ever-coy power broker does seem to genuinely delight in Ferrer's pleading. But Ferrer is caught in a Catch-22. Unless he scores some major last-minute black endorsements, his African American popular support will

probably remain soft. On the other hand, unless his shot at a runoff improves—which would require greater African American popular support than he now has—there's little incentive for major black politicians to jump in on his behalf.

IN A FOUR-MAN, low-turnout primary, Ferrer's problems with blacks might be surmountable if he had overwhelming support from his Latino base. Yet it's not at all clear that he does. The day after his meeting with Sharpton, Ferrer took part in the city's annual Dominican Day parade in midtown Manhattan, his entourage just a few hundred yards behind that of the front-running Green. As Green and his phalanx of supporters made their way up 6th Avenue, the crowd went crazy. Whistles blew. Dominican flags waved everywhere. People screamed—maybe for Green, maybe for the 20 to 30 Dominican men and women surrounding him; either way, the effect was the same.

When Ferrer appeared a few minutes later, there were no young Dominicans bouncing behind him, just a few officious-looking associates flanking him on either side. Trailing him was a light-blue bus hauling a single passenger, an announcer yelling, "Fernaaaaaando Ferreeeeeer!" at apparently random intervals. The bus pulled a trailer with a large Puerto Rican flag stretched taut at one end and a Dominican flag wilting at the other. When I asked a twenty-something parade-goer why Ferrer had brought a Puerto Rican flag to the Dominican Day parade, he paused and then, shaking his head, said, "I don't know."

Ferrer's campaign has proved an object lesson in the political axiom that Latinos don't vote monolithically. While Ferrer's fellow Puerto Ricans back him overwhelmingly, Dominicans, now New York City's second-largest Hispanic subgroup, don't necessarily identify with him. "There's friction," concedes Angelo Falcón, senior policy executive of the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund. "Years ago some Dominicans thought the Puerto Ricans were trying to hold them back, to be gatekeepers." Ditto for the rapidly growing South and Central American population in Queens. A city council race this year in the Corona-Jackson Heights area features two candidates of Ecuadoran extraction and one Dominican. All three grumble that the lone Puerto Rican in the race has been dispatched by the city's Puerto Rican machine to keep the district in its fold.

Indeed, the further Ferrer gets from his heavily Puerto Rican Bronx stronghold, the worse he does. In a survey this May by the Hispanic Federation, 75 percent of Bronx Latinos supported Ferrer—but that number fell to 61 percent in Brooklyn, 58 percent in heavily Dominican Manhattan, and 53 percent in increasingly Central and South American Queens. More recent polls, though slightly less accurate, show Ferrer doing even worse: garnering as little as 50 percent among Hispanics citywide. Ferrer likes to point out that Dinkins "got 70 percent of the Latino vote in 1989," and wonders if "anyone seriously believe[s] I'd receive less than that." The difference is that Dinkins also got 93 percent of the African American vote. And no amount of time spent courting Al Sharpton will accomplish that for Fernando Ferrer. ■

Robert Johnson, W.'s favorite race baiter.

Painted Black

By JONATHAN CHAIT

ROBERT L. JOHNSON came to the Bush administration's attention when it needed him most. The cause of the White House's duress was an annoyingly munificent collection of millionaires, headed by Bill Gates Sr., who had banded together to oppose President Bush's plan to abolish the estate tax. In newspaper ads and press conferences, they held forth on the obligation of the wealthy to give back to society. So effectively did they seize the moral high ground that even the most fervent opponents of the estate tax resigned themselves to it. "[I]t is looking increasingly doubtful," reported *The Wall Street Journal* a week later, "that large estates will escape federal taxation altogether."

Evidently this didn't sit well with Johnson, the billionaire founder of Black Entertainment Television (BET), whose family stood to gain millions if Bush succeeded. Johnson is not a man with a deep sense of social obligation. Not long ago, when an interviewer prodded him for his views on philanthropy, Johnson scoffed, "[B]eing a very wealthy person is not something that I wake up in the morning and say, 'Gee, I got all this money. How do I give it away?'" There is, however, an important exception to this every-man-for-himself ethos: society's duty to aid extremely wealthy African Americans. This social obligation Johnson takes very seriously.

So Johnson did what he often does when his interests are at stake: He played the race card. Johnson gathered a collection of black business leaders and demanded an end to the estate tax. Taking out newspaper ads of their own, Johnson's group attacked the tax for draining wealth from the black community. Unlike "very wealthy white Americans" who supported the tax, he declared, "We as African Americans have come to our wealth on a different path, a different road than they have." Gates and his friends, Johnson implied, were not really promoting the common good; they were trying to keep the black man down. All of a sudden, it was not so clear who held the moral high ground. Estate tax repeal had become a civil rights issue.

Almost no one—not even the White House—had thought to frame the issue this way. And for good reason: It is a bizarre inversion of the truth. "Elimination of the Estate Tax," Johnson's ad argued, using extraneous capitalizations for emphasis, "will help close the wealth gap in this nation between African American families and White families." But the estate tax is paid only by people who inherit large fortunes, and black people, as one might suspect, are far less likely than white people to do so. (Blacks make up about 12 percent of the population, but less than one-half of 1 percent of estate tax payers.) And the revenues from the tax, obvi-

ously, fund government programs, which tend to help those with low incomes, who are disproportionately black. Repealing the estate tax, therefore, would dramatically *widen* the wealth gap.

But Johnson gave Bush the cover he needed to once again cast himself as a champion of minority interests. "As Robert Johnson of Black Entertainment Television argues, the death tax and double taxation weighs heavily on minorities," said Bush, who added that his plan would allow people to transfer wealth "from one generation to the next, regardless of a person's race."

Fortunately for Johnson, and even more fortunately for his heirs, estate tax repeal subsequently passed into law. But Johnson's campaign to abolish the estate tax was more than just a way to save a few million bucks. It was the beginning of a political partnership between the CEO of BET and the president of the United States, one that has now turned its attention to an even grander cause: the privatization of Social Security. On May 2, Bush appointed Johnson to his commission charged with transforming the popular program. Once again, Johnson has racialized a long-standing conservative crusade. We must turn Social Security into a system with individual investment accounts, he argues, because the existing program unfairly shortchanges blacks. Social Security overhaul is Bush's most radical—and most politically perilous—aspiration. That the administration has entrusted Johnson with this task, despite his lack of expertise (and, indeed, his lack of any history of public interest in the issue), is a measure of the ideological reliability with which it now regards him. Johnson, according to one analyst, "is trying to position himself as Bush's go-to guy in the African American community." And it looks like he's succeeding.

AT FIRST BLUSH, there is something peculiar about this burgeoning partnership. Before Bush took office, Johnson cut the standard political profile of a member of the black bourgeoisie—his strongest political connections were with the civil rights establishment, and he donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to Democrats. And yet his alliance with the president is not as strange as it may appear. Johnson has spent his career converting the moral capital of the black struggle for equality to his own personal economic advantage. One of Bush's central innovations has been to cloak an economic agenda radically geared to the interests of the wealthy in multicultural imagery. In a sense, the business strategy of Robert Johnson and the political strategy of George W. Bush were destined for each other.

Johnson presents himself as the very opposite of a shrewd manipulator of racial politics. His preferred self-image is that of a bottom-line businessman who does his best to disregard racial barriers. A *New York Times* profile last year began with Johnson recounting how, early in his career, he swallowed his anger while a white colleague told a racist joke at a bar. (Profiles of Johnson often feature him recounting racial slights, always to make the point that he is not bothered by them.) The *Times* summed up Johnson's ethos this way: "That philosophy—keep emotions in check, don't let issues of race get in the way of the deal—has helped Mr. Johnson, 54, become one of the country's most successful black entrepreneurs."

But while Johnson's talent as a businessman is undeniable—he has, after all, earned more than \$1 billion from scratch—he didn't come by his fortune through the classic build-a-better-mousetrap method of American capitalism. Rather, his genius lies in finding certain corners of the economy where he can guarantee himself a steady stream of risk-free profit without having to provide goods or services of any special value. He does so by making himself politically indispensable to his business partners. Johnson's career has less in common with Henry Ford than with, say, the Soviet gas monopoly. And to acquire such franchises, he offers not bakshesh but racial absolution.

Johnson first demonstrated this ability in 1979, when, as a cable TV lobbyist, he came up with the one true innovation in his business career: a cable TV station targeted to black viewers. At the time, cities represented cable's only remaining untapped market. And cable companies that could claim to support black culture enjoyed a political advantage in the race to wire them. All of which set the stage for Johnson's sweetheart deal. A Denver-based cable giant called TCI put up half a million dollars to acquire a minority share of Johnson's new network, which he called Black Entertainment Television. Johnson got the majority stake—after putting up just \$15,000 of his own money. The benefit to TCI was clear: It could tell the mayors and city councils in charge of doling out contracts that it carried and financed a black-owned, black-themed station. "Under traditional investment standards, the return on investment has not been what one



would look for," a TCI official told *The Washington Post* ten years later. But that, he added, doesn't account for "how much goodwill we get from making a major attempt to provide programming of interest to the minority community." Johnson, meanwhile, reaped a windfall.

Of course, now that Johnson had a cable station, he had to put content on the air. But this turned out to be pretty simple, too. Since BET's main purpose was to score political points for Johnson's financial patron, the actual programming hardly mattered. As Johnson liked to tell his staff, "We don't have to reinvent

the wheel. We just have to paint it black." During its first couple of years, BET broadcast only two hours per week—an old movie on Friday nights. It took four years to expand to 24-hour broadcasting, and its main criterion still seems to be finding ways to fill airtime at no cost. The network devotes hour after hour to infomercials—"Black Entertainment Television," goes one joke, "is neither black nor entertainment." And it relies heavily on music videos, which studios provide to the network for free in order to promote their albums and which, as of two years ago, accounted for more than half of BET's content.

Unfortunately, the videos tend to feature the least edifying elements of African American culture—gangsta rappers and booty-shaking dancers. That's one reason Johnson and BET have for years come under withering criticism within the African American community. One BET executive confessed at a music conference in June 1996 that she doesn't permit her daughter to watch the station. Aaron McGruder, who authors an edgy cartoon about black life, has made a living disparaging Johnson. In one strip, a character asserts that he "used to be a firm believer" that "powerful black business people would then act in the best interests of black America." But then "BET shot a few holes in that theory."

Johnson has also endured criticism for serving as a front man for TCI—a role he reprised in 1984 when he acquired the rights to provide cable television to Washington, D.C. Like many other local governments, Washington's city council put great emphasis on finding a locally owned, minority contractor. Even though the council's cable committee recommended another firm, Johnson's group won the bid, in large part—as the *Post* suggested at the time—because its

shareholders included a number of cronies and financial donors of then-Mayor Marion Barry.

Johnson promised that his company “would not be back seeking relief from promises we could not keep.” But, within a few months, Johnson acknowledged (as did cable contractors in other cities) that he could not keep his commitment without millions of dollars in concessions from the city. Johnson also obtained tens of millions in additional financing from TCI, giving it financial control of the operation. With Johnson and his local, minority partners reduced to figureheads, a *Post* columnist observed, “Would the D.C. City Council have given the cable franchise in the first place to a white company from Denver with local black managers? I doubt it.”

JOHNSON HAS A blunt reply to such detractors. “There are thousands of white businessmen who never get asked, ‘Are you a hero?’ and never are asked what they have given back to the white community,” he told C-SPAN in 1992, “What are my responsibilities to black people at large? If I help my family get over and deal with the problems they might confront, then I have achieved that one goal that is my responsibility to society at large.”

As Johnson tells it, he asks only to be treated like any other entrepreneur, black or white. But he applies his disregard for race selectively. When he’s asked to help the black community, he’s just a businessman. On the other hand, when Johnson’s own interests are at stake, he portrays himself as a stand-in for black America. Race is his catchall justification for all sorts of socially and economically noxious behavior. He has turned the racial mau-mau into a business plan.

For example, Johnson has a long record of quashing efforts by his underpaid employees to unionize. On one occasion he laid off or reduced the hours of BET workers who joined an electricians’ union, an action that a federal judge subsequently ruled illegal. He justifies such behavior by accusing the unions of racial bias for trying to organize a black-owned network. “I don’t see them taking part in the [NAACP’s threatened network] boycott. I don’t see them writing open letters to the networks about their lack of black representation. Why do they pick on BET? Why not ABC or NBC or Fox?”

In 1994 Johnson brought his tactics to the world of professional sports when he decided he wanted to purchase Washington’s NBA franchise, the Bullets. When the team’s owner, Abe Pollin, turned down his entreaties, Johnson tried another tack. “I told him, ‘Abe, you’re from the suburbs, I’m from the city,’” he recounted to the *Post*, “‘You’re white, I’m black. The city is mostly black, and the players are too.’” When Pollin resisted this line of reasoning, Johnson declared that he wanted to bring a second NBA franchise to the area. The league, he acknowledged, traditionally discourages the establishment of a new franchise in such close proximity to an existing one. But, he mused, it might not want to oppose a prospective black owner. That plan failed, too, but only after Johnson waged a protracted fight against Pollin’s effort to build a new arena in downtown Washington—just the sort of economic development most boosters of the majority-black city encourage.

But the quintessential Robert Johnson business deal was unveiled last spring, when United Airlines announced its intention to purchase its main rival, US Airways. The merger was politically perilous, since the Clinton Justice Department did not seem favorably disposed toward another merger in such a heavily consolidated industry. The airlines tried to solve this problem by cutting Johnson in on the deal. Under the proposed arrangement, Johnson would create a new airline, DC Air. DC Air would lease its planes and runway spots from United, with which—in theory—it would also compete.

It was yet another no-lose proposition for Johnson. He would get a pre-fab airline—complete with planes, parts, and the people to make it work—for well below market value. (Continental Airlines subsequently offered to pay 50 percent more than Johnson for the same assets.) In return, Johnson provided United essentially the same thing Virgil “the Turk” Sollozzo wanted from Don Corleone: police and political protection. Johnson enjoyed a close relationship with President Clinton, having donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to Democratic campaigns. Airline analysts speculated—but, of course, could not prove—that United believed Johnson’s influence could help make antitrust concerns disappear.

Johnson quickly went about using race to demonize the merger’s opponents. In a hearing on June 15 of last year, James Oberstar, the top-ranking Democrat on the House Transportation Committee, pointed out that DC Air would be dependent on its supposed rival, United. “That’s not a real competitive environment,” Oberstar noted. At that point he slipped in an unfortunate phrase: “That’s a plantation.” Oberstar later explained that he was trying to draw an analogy to the serf-like status of the District of Columbia, which is sometimes called “the last plantation.” But US Airways Chairman Stephen Wolf saw the remark on C-SPAN, and—no doubt sensing an opportunity—phoned Johnson, who pounced. Calling Oberstar’s remark “blatant racism,” he demanded that the congressman apologize and recuse himself from the issue. Oberstar dutifully apologized, but Johnson played the race card again the following January, accusing New York Senator Charles E. Schumer, a merger critic, of favoring DC Air’s rivals “because they are white businesspersons.”

Despite Johnson’s best efforts, the Justice Department delayed the merger. In fact, its review dragged on past the end of the year (before being officially nixed at the end of July). But, even before the deal fell through, something happened that completely overturned its political calculus: Bush took office. All at once, Johnson’s connections with Clinton were useless. “I think with [Johnson’s] issue on the airlines,” speculates Harry Alford, a fellow black anti-estate-tax activist, “he saw he had to get both sides of the aisle.”

AS ALFORD IMPLIES, it is highly unlikely that Johnson would have undergone such a rapid political metamorphosis had his business dealings not demanded it. Yet his newfound conservatism is not entirely philosophically incoherent. The premise of Johnson’s special pleading has always been that his business interests are the only legitimate

civil rights issue. His right to amass more wealth trumps his employees' interest in higher wages, the community's interest in non-debasing black entertainment, and travelers' interest in affordable airfares. The fact that many of the people on the other side of the equation are black does not enter into Johnson's accounting. And, in recent months, he seems to have discovered that the moral logic that propelled his spectacular business career has an application in the world of public policy as well.

Johnson's interest in the estate tax is, of course, a direct consequence of his financial interests. His membership on the President's Commission to Strengthen Social Security, on the other hand, came about by accident. In mid-March, Johnson delivered a speech at Brown University about his life. By happenstance, Sam Beard was in the audience. Beard is a full-time evangelist for Social Security privatization. He is particularly intent on sharing the gospel with nonconservatives—he treated me to a soliloquy in the course of telling this story—and can explain the idea so it sounds not like the product of right-wing think tanks but like the natural outgrowth of the Great Society. Beard saw in Johnson an ideal convert. "His whole presentation is about wealth," recounts Beard, meaning this as a compliment. Beard struck up a conversation with Johnson and, finding him receptive, asked whether he would like to serve on a presidential commission on the topic if invited to. Johnson said yes.

Chuck Blahous, the White House staffer in charge of Social Security reform, does not recall the precise genesis of Johnson's involvement. "We were looking for diversity of background," he explains. In fact, there is nothing in the public record to suggest that Johnson had any previous interest in the topic. And that may have worked in his favor. Johnson's obvious role on the commission is to argue that Social Security privatization will help blacks, who, he claims, are treated unfairly by the current system. Pro-privatization think tanks, such as the Heritage Foundation and the Cato Institute, have argued that for years, pumping out position papers and targeting the black media. But the idea never received much mainstream attention until Bush anointed Johnson to take it up. Johnson well understands his role—he brings up the racial angle at every turn, generally leaving to others the broader case for personal accounts. He doesn't have to reinvent the case for privatization. He just has to paint it black.

JOHNSON'S ARGUMENT IS rooted in a simple misunderstanding. "African Americans who contribute to the Social Security system and payroll taxes," he says, "also have one of the highest mortality rates, so in the end, they may not receive the full benefits of what they put in Social Security." And it's true that blacks, on average, die younger than whites. Social Security pays its retirement benefits only as long as a worker is alive. Therefore, privatizers conclude, blacks would particularly benefit from individual retirement accounts. That way, those who die early won't get less benefits—extra money in their account will be passed on to their heirs.

There are two reasons this conclusion is false. First, Social Security does more than pay benefits to retirees. It also gives benefits to the families of workers who die or are disabled at

a young age. Since black workers are more likely to suffer workplace injuries, they benefit disproportionately from this part of the program. And the more Social Security tax dollars are drained away into private accounts—as Bush proposes to do—the less that is available for survivors' benefits.

Second, Social Security's retirement benefits are progressive: They offer a higher rate of return to lower-paid workers. Since black workers, on average, earn less than the population at large, they benefit from this redistribution. This *more than* makes up for any loss they suffer from dying younger. On the whole, then, Social Security redistributes money from whites to blacks. Most plans for private accounts do not. As with the estate tax, Johnson has his racial analysis backward.

But Johnson's argument is more than untrue; it is deeply revealing. Before Social Security, retirees couldn't know how much of a pension to allot themselves out of their savings, if they had any, because they didn't know how long they would live. If they spent too much, they might outlive their savings. Social Security fixed that problem by giving retired workers a guaranteed income for as long as they lived. Johnson, and Bush's commission, now argue that it would make more sense to give each retiree an individual account. It's true that this one feature, by itself, would tend to benefit those who die younger. But, of course, nobody can be *certain* that he or she will die young. Suppose we were to discover that, say, Italian-Americans are somewhat less likely than other Americans to lose their homes from natural disasters. One could then make the case that federal disaster relief constitutes a net transfer of wealth out of their community, and that they should oppose it. The important point here is not even that blacks wouldn't benefit from Social Security privatization. It's that Johnson implicitly rejects the very idea that politics is about the common good.

CONSERVATIVES USED TO vehemently—sometimes even eloquently—oppose this kind of thinking. Color-blindness, they once insisted, was the only moral basis for decent public policy. But the Bush administration has changed that. It boasts incessantly about its racial, ethnic, and gender diversity and has hatched a slew of initiatives targeted at specific constituencies. For women, the White House is pushing the "Winning Women" campaign. For Catholics, Bush appropriates the language of the Church. For Mexican-Americans, Bush last month floated an amnesty program that wouldn't apply to all immigrants—just this one, politically important immigrant group. Bush, of course, did not invent identity politics; his contribution has been to tether it to policies geared toward the interests of accumulated wealth.

In short, Bushism and Johnsonism are made for each other; their nascent alliance represents a historic synthesis of the racial separatism of the left and the libertarianism of the right. Johnson, even more than Bush, seemed to recognize this commonality from the beginning. "If he's smart," the businessman said of the president last April, "he'd take the opportunity to reach out to these African American business leaders and say, 'We agree on at least one thing. What else can we talk about?'" The answer, alas, is plenty. ■

Stanley Kauffmann on Films “Nessun Dorma”

ALLAN MILLER BEGAN his professional life as a musician—an orchestral conductor, in fact. Some twenty years ago he moved from making music into making documentary films about musicians. Some of the results, done with special empathy, were *High Fidelity*, a charmer about the Guarneri Quartet, and *Small Wonders*, an account of violin-teaching in Harlem from which the Meryl Streep film *Music of the Heart* was drawn. Now Miller has gone from relatively small-scale subjects into immensity with a delight called *The Turandot Project* (Zeitgeist).

In 1997 a production of Puccini's *Turandot* was done in Florence at the Maggio Musicale. The conductor was Zubin Mehta, and the stage director was Zhang Yimou, the premier Chinese film director whose most recent work is *The Road Home*. (Mehta tells us on the soundtrack that when the production was being mulled and they were thinking about a stage director, he, having seen Zhang's *Raise the Red Lantern*, said, “Why don't we get *that* guy?”) Then a year later Mehta and Zhang did another production of *Turandot* in Beijing, on a special stage built in the Forbidden City.

This fantasy, all true, goes on. For the Beijing production, an entirely new set of costumes—several hundred—was created. The new ones were dynastically accurate: Zhang apparently had thought that such accuracy was not essential in the West, but in China, he says in the film, audiences would hoot if dynasties were mixed. Nine straight performances of *Turandot* were given in Beijing, and no soprano or tenor could be asked to bear such a load; so Mehta took along three apiece of *Turandot*, Calaf, and Liù. In Florence the production seems plentifully lavish, but in Beijing we learn what “lavish” really means. One example: Zhang was assigned three hundred Chinese soldiers who were drilled and costumed as extras. We can imagine that when Miller first considered this project—a double project, really—he must have trembled, both with worry and with joy.

The film begins with the end of a perfor-

mance in Florence. The lovers are united, the chorus carols its joy, the opera finishes in acoustic dazzle, and the singers take their bows. As the applause thunders forth, Miller begins the account of the two productions. Mehta himself does a good deal of the narration on the soundtrack, with verve and wit. (Also, at a rehearsal in Florence, as he urges the chorus to be more barbaric, he shows verve and wit in Italian.) Zhang is attended always by a translator, and there are also numerous comments by him to the camera—with subtitles, of course.

We never see much of Zhang's staging: most of the performance sequences are long shots with the stage filled or close shots of individual arias or dances. Still, it is clear that Zhang was not pleased with his work either in Florence or in Beijing. His stage experience had apparently been sparse: he says that he took on this job just for “the credit of China.” And he provides a clue to his theater inexperience when he complains that, in opera production, there are too many people to consult about a problem. He prefers, believe it or not, the relative simplicity of film-making.

In Beijing, too, there were further troubles. Zhang has conflicts with the lighting designer, who somewhat grudgingly adds the lights that the director wants. One of the singers of *Turandot*, Sharon Sweet, protests to Mehta about her head-dress. Zhang exhorts the stagehands to move the rolling platforms smoothly for their country's sake, which is his reason for being there. Some not quite incidental notes: the soldiers think at first that Puccini's music sounds like a moaning cow, but they become accustomed to it and even, we are told, hum some tunes. A government agent explains proudly that the soldiers in the show are full of socialist morals that will help them to do well as extras. Mehta even tells us, smilingly, that he got a certain necessary permission from an official by presenting him with a box of choice Indian mangoes.

As for the music, we hear a good deal of it. Liù's big aria is complete; “*Nessun dorma*” is sung twice at widely spaced points; my own favorite, “*In questa reg-*

gia,” gets done smashingly. All the singers in the three leading roles are good, but Sweet stands out—for more than the fact that she is nearly Brando-size.

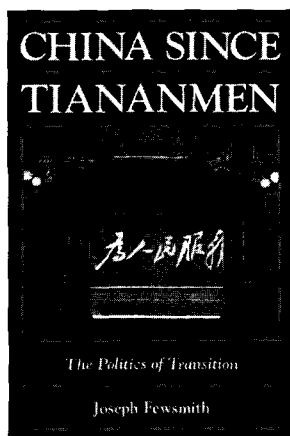
The opera itself is doubly fitting for this double project, and not just because the composer was Italian and the setting is China. First, *Turandot* is essentially a display piece, and display, not grave art, was the basic aim of this mammoth exercise. Adorno said that Puccini's operas “were conceived with imaginary potpourris in mind, potpourris that arise once the last tear elicited by operatic catastrophe has trickled away.” Tears are certainly elicited here, and Puccini's Technicolor dramatic passages linger high in our craniums. Secondly, Miller has fashioned his film so that the lushness of opera-producing itself—in these instances, anyway—becomes a counterpoint to the lush score.

The latest in the flow of refurbished foreign films is Jean-Luc Godard's *Band of Outsiders* (Rialto). It was made in 1964; now re-issued in a fresh print with more idiomatic subtitles, it gives us a new look at Godard. When the picture first appeared, it was part of Godard's relatively new attack on the pieties of filmmaking, an attack that persisted as such through *Weekend* in 1968. He certainly did not become conventional after that, but his irruptions became—and remain—a dependable part of the cinematic world. The enfant terrible has become, aesthetically, a reliably eccentric old-timer. This re-issue therefore has its Memory Lane aspect.

Band of Outsiders is about two young men and a young woman in Paris. The men, who drive around in a flashy car, are apparently criminals, though very unskilled ones, and are bent on stealing a vast amount of cash from the young woman's employers. They cajole her into helping them, all the while competing for the young woman's favors. She sleeps with one of them, but the competition continues.

The mode of the film is parody of the trite crime flick, represented by the American B-movies that get mentioned along the way. Whenever triteness looms, when we think we know what is coming, Godard does something else. The three principals have drinks in a café and start out about their business when suddenly they stop to do a quite complicated dance number, obviously well rehearsed, as if a whim had just occurred to them. When the three are about to enter the rich people's house and rob it, they induce the young woman to take off her stockings—because they'll

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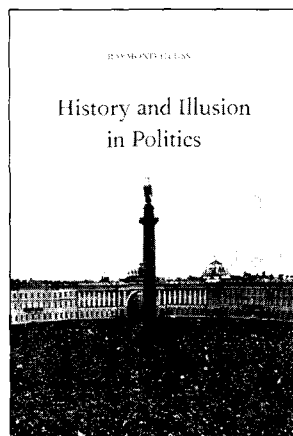
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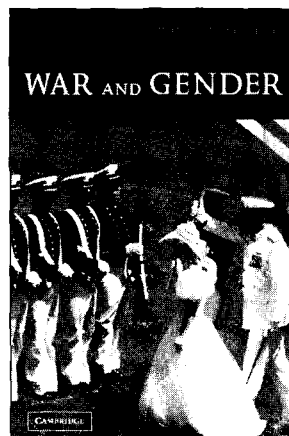
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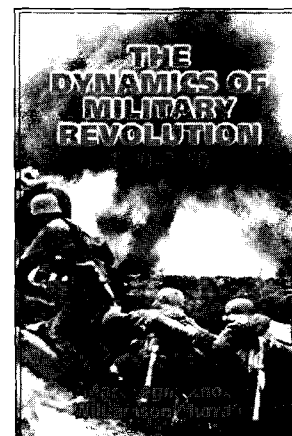
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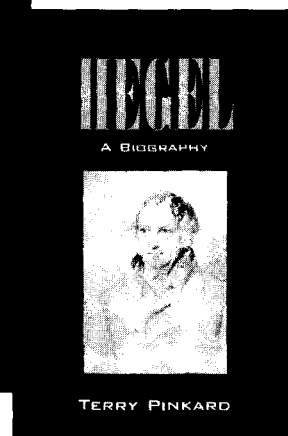
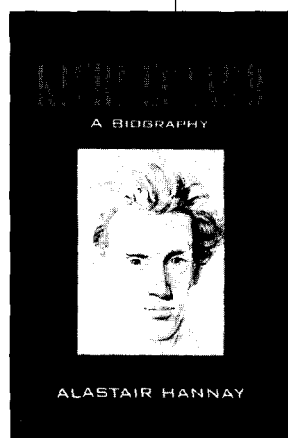
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wrinkle her skin. Then each of the men uses one of her stockings as a burglar's mask. In broad daylight, they carry a ladder around the outside of the house and try to enter an upper window. Later they tramp noisily through the house. When the owner appears, a woman, she merely

orders the robbers to leave, which they do not. They stuff her in a wardrobe, where she smothers, but her death does not seem any more real than all the rest. It is as if she were merely playing dead as part of this spoof.

In Godard's first feature, *Breathless*,

made in 1960 and as vital as ever, he used some of the stylistics of the past, particularly of Renoir—for his own ends, of course. Still, he used them. From then on, he attacked or ignored them, often quite lightheartedly. *Band of Outsiders* is a revolutionary soufflé. ■

From the radicalism of the '60s to the interventionism of the '90s.

The Passion of Joschka Fischer

By PAUL BERMAN

I.

LAST JANUARY, *Stern* magazine in Germany published a set of five grainy photographs of Joschka Fischer, the German foreign minister and vice chancellor, as a young bully in a street battle in Frankfurt. It was April 1973. The photos showed: a figure in a black motorcycle helmet, labeled as Fischer, facing off against another figure in a white policeman's helmet, with a dented Volkswagen squatting in the background; the black-helmeted Fischer drawing near, and a skinny girl or maybe a long-haired boy (this was an androgynous era) running to join him; Fischer and other people on the attack, the white-helmeted cop going into a crouch; Fischer's black-gloved fist raised as if to punch the crouching cop on the back, Fischer's comrades crowding around; the cop huddled on the ground, Fischer and his comrades appearing to kick him, with two additional people watching. And no more dented Volkswagen. The photographer has evidently been circling around the skirmish, snapping his camera in what must have been a frenzy of adrenaline, each picture taken from a different angle.

Those were brutal photographs. One glance at them and you were back in the days of left-wing street fighting from the late 1960s and 1970s, when young militants in West Germany were always pouring into the streets, and Volkswagens were getting dented right and left. And the photographs, having conjured the past, provoked an outcry. The Joschka Fischer of 2001 was a member of the party called, in expressively anti-bureaucratic fashion, "the Greens"—a man of the left on its hipper, friskier side. He happened to be the very first Green to hold a ministry in Ger-

many's federal government, let alone the foreign ministry. A powerful man, therefore a man with enemies. The photographs gazed bleakly at the world from the semi-glossy pages of *Stern*, and flames of Christian Democratic wrath erupted at once from those many partisan enemies. Germany's foreign minister had disgraced himself in those photographs; had embarrassed his nation; had lost the ability to represent Germany to the world; ought to be investigated, to be indicted, to resign.

The street battles of 1973 took place long ago, and it could have been supposed that Fischer's enemies, having given vent to a thousand pent-up furies and Christian Democratic resentments, would eventually calm down, and the scandal of those ancient photographs would fade. The editors of *Stern* seem to have anticipated that sort of development. The magazine advertised its photographs on the cover with a quotation from Fischer ("Ja, ich war militant"), but the big story in that week's issue was Europe's meat crisis, illustrated by a giant sausage skewered on the tines of an oversized barbecue fork. Mad cow disease, now *that* was a lasting story.

The weeks went by, though, and the Fischer affair, instead of fading, grew in intensity and scale. Like the broken tape on the door at the Watergate, or the girl's confessions on Linda Tripp's treacherous recording, the photographs in *Stern* seemed to pull slowly at a curtain that, as it opened, revealed ever more distant peaks of unsuspected scandals (or non-scandals, depending on your interpretation). The controversy spread to France. In London, *The Observer*, playing the part of the yellow press, gave the polemic a slightly demented sexual twist. The Italians weighed in. The Fischer affair achieved at last a large enough dimension and a sufficiently accusatory tone to be described rather grandly but not inaccurately as "the trial of the generation of 1968" by the editors of the Paris daily *Libération* (who know something about

the generation of 1968)—an unforeseeably rich and vivid scandal, fecund with implications for Europe and modern life and thirty or forty years of history.

THE PHOTOGRAPHS WERE delivered to *Stern* by a thirty-eight-year-old woman named Bettina Röhl, who described herself as an "independent journalist" but whose notoriety was owed mostly to her family background, which could hardly have been more sensational. Bettina Röhl was the daughter of Ulrike Meinhof. In the heyday of the left-wing movement of the late 1960s and 1970s, Ulrike Meinhof was more than well-known in West Germany. She was a militant and a political theorist on the left's leftmost wing—one of the crazies, you would have to say, except that craziness and sanity were very much under interrogation.

In 1970, Ulrike Meinhof staged an armed jailbreak to free an imprisoned comrade named Andreas Baader, who was serving three years for his own violent antics. (He had set fire to a Frankfurt department store.) Baader and Meinhof, together with Horst Mahler and a few other desperadoes of the revolutionary left, organized what became casually known as the Baader-Meinhof Gang, but was more formally and correctly called the Red Army Faction. In American English, the German word *Fraktion* is usually rendered as "faction," which falls easily on the ear; but anyone who remembers the old Communist phrase book will recognize that "fraction," in English, used to be a perfectly legitimate and precise term, connoting a disciplined party unit akin to a cell—the opposite of a faction, which is a party unit that has escaped the party's discipline. A Marxist-Leninist party does not have factions, unless the party is in disarray. But a Marxist-Leninist party does have fractions, or party units that go out into the world and militate as best they can, according to plan.

PAUL BERMAN is the author of *A Tale of Two Utopias: The Political Journey of the Generation of 1968* (Norton).



Bettina Röhl's photographs of Joschka Fischer (in black helmet) attacking a policeman, Frankfurt, April 1973

Baader and Meinhof's Red Army Fraction was tiny. But it went out into the world and proved to be extremely violent. Kidnappings, bank holdups, murders: the group refrained from nothing. A bombing in 1972 killed four American soldiers. A few years later someone machine-gunned to death the prosecutor who wanted to try the group for killing the soldiers. Reprisals were a specialty. The Red Army Fraction was hardy, too. The West German authorities did their repressive best, but the guerrilla organization managed to keep itself alive, recruiting new members from ever younger generations to replace the fallen, and persisting in its killings and kidnappings from decade to decade into the mid-1990s—a long run in a well-ordered place such as Germany.

Even today, a political legacy from the old Baader-Meinhof tendency has managed to linger on, though without a clandestine wing, or so it is said. The Red Army Fraction remained strong during those many years because its leaders were clever and its militants fanatical, but also because it enjoyed the secret backing of the government of East Germany, meaning the Soviet bloc, for as long as there was a Soviet bloc, which gave the group a real institutional power. (The Red Army Fraction was tiny, but the Red Army was not.) Yet the organization clung to life mainly for another reason, which lay at the heart of the several scandals that flooded outward from the grainy photographs in *Stern* this year.

The radical student movement during the years around 1968—I will call it the New Left, using the American and English term—was never especially powerful in the Federal Republic of Germany as a whole, not compared to the big political parties and the industrial groups and the trade unions. But in the world of the university students and the young people's neighborhoods and the younger intellectuals, the New Left was a gigantic presence. And the Red Army Fraction grew naturally from that soil. Ulrike Meinhof herself was by all accounts an intelligent and articulate leader, a woman already thirty-seven years old when she helped to

organize her guerrilla army, which meant that, in matters of age, she towered over the New Left's rank and file, the student naïfs. She knew how to drape the grand ideals of German philosophy across her organization and its doings. To be sure, her guerrilla army was reviled by an overwhelming majority of West Germans, the put-upon bystanders and potential victims and frightened citizens.

But in the universities and the counter-cultural districts in Frankfurt and Berlin and a few other places, her tiny organization drew on the active and even enthusiastic support of a not-so-small number of people, plus the passive support of far larger numbers, the leftists who would never have endorsed a program of violence and who wanted nothing to do with murders, but who would have said that, even so, the Red Army Fraction did have reason to despise German bourgeois society, and Marxist revolution was an excellent idea, and state repression posed a greater threat to society than any guerrilla resistance from the left. And shouldn't we progressives and reasonable leftists worry chiefly about civil liberties? And so forth: the many arguments and apologies that people offer in circumstances when, out of confusion and moral timidity, they are too frightened to applaud the murders and the kidnappings, and too frightened to condemn them.

The Red Army Fraction claimed a fraternity with the new breed of revolutionary groups around the world. "We must learn," Meinhof said in her original manifesto back in 1970, "from the revolutionary movements of the world—the Vietcong, the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Tupamaros [of Uruguay], the Black Panthers." But mostly her organization resembled several other guerrilla currents that got their start in the New Left upsurges of Europe in those same years: the Red Brigades in Italy; the Irish Republican Army in its modern, Marxist version (which revived a defunct military organization from many years before); the Corsican nationalist guerrillas; and the Basque ETA—small groups each and every one, but tough, and with a degree of popular

support that made each of those groups nearly indestructible during the next decades.

The Red Army Fraction was not exactly invulnerable. In 1972, the West German police did manage to arrest a number of key warriors. They arrested Meinhof herself. But arrests only rendered the group fashionable. Jean-Paul Sartre expressed an admiring appreciation—a cagey admiration, designed to leave him unstained by any crimes that the guerrillas might commit. Meinhof wrote the famous philosopher a letter, inviting him to visit Baader in jail, "to give us the protection of your name and your gifts as a Marxist, philosopher, journalist and moralist." Sartre came. But the martyrdom only deepened. One of the imprisoned warriors had already committed suicide by the time of Sartre's visit, and in 1976 Meinhof likewise committed suicide in her maximum-security cell—though some people suspected an official murder.

Her death was followed the next year by the suicides of Baader and two others in the same jail, which even more people suspected was official murder. And the deaths, as they piled up, radiated a morbid glamour. It was a highbrow glamour—the kind of glamour that, as Peter Wollen pointed out in *The London Review of Books*, would by 1995 lead New York's Museum of Modern Art to devote an exhibition to paintings of those suicides (assuming they were suicides), a sacralization in high art. But it was also a street glamour. The death of Meinhof alone, back in 1976, was enough to send crowds of young people swarming into the West German streets, enraged at the jails and at the revolutionary defeats and at the thousand injustices of modern life.

JOSCHKA FISCHER WAS among those angry crowds. He was a young firebrand in Frankfurt. At one of the Meinhof demonstrations, somebody tossed a Molotov cocktail at a policeman and burned him nearly to death. Fischer and a dozen other radicals were arrested and jailed for two days, though no charges were ever lodged against them.

Fischer was not especially famous at the time, outside of the radical left, and in later years, as he rose in national politics, not many people remembered that he had spent those days in jail or had been under any suspicion at all. Still, some people, the left-wing insiders, not to mention the policeman and his friends, did retain the memory. And in those first days of 2001, when *Stern* published the photographs from 1973, Meinhof's daughter, Röhl, revived the accusation against him. She insisted that Fischer did, in fact, bear a responsibility for the Molotov cocktail and the policeman's injuries.

A couple of participants in the radical movement from those days backed her up, too, and said that, in planning the particular demonstration in which the policeman was attacked, Fischer had never ruled out the use of Molotovs and may even have favored it. A retired colleague of the injured policeman was adamant about Fischer's responsibility. No one came up with any sort of indisputable confirmation. But Fischer was obliged to rise from his seat once again and, in his dignity as foreign minister, deny all connection to a very ugly event from long ago (*"Definitiv nein!"* he told *Stern*)—which would have been unpleasant under any circumstances but must have been doubly so in the light of the photographs, the five atrocious photographs that made him seem all too capable in his younger years of having organized a Molotov cocktail attack.

There was another accusation. Fischer was said to have tossed stones and Molotov cocktails during yet a different raucous demonstration, this one in 1975 at the Spanish Embassy—an angry protest against Generalissimo Franco and Spanish fascism. Fischer denied that accusation, too, though he did acknowledge through his spokesman at the Foreign Ministry that he had participated in the event, which had never been a secret anyway. The spokesman reminded the German public that demonstrating against Franco and fascism was nothing to be ashamed of. A good point: something to be proud of, at last!

Then another accusation: Fischer was accused of having attended a meeting of the Palestine Liberation Organization in Algiers back in 1969, at which the PLO adopted a resolution to achieve final victory, which is to say, the destruction of Israel. That was not so good, and seemed triply bad for a future foreign minister of Germany, even if no one threw rocks or bombs. The ministry spokesman conceded that Fischer did attend the conference; but, doing his best to cope with one more embarrassing revelation, the spokesman made the mistake of adding that Fischer had spent only an hour there, which was

like admitting to using marijuana but not to inhaling it. And, of course, the part about spending only an hour turned out to be untrue, and the spokesman, backtracking, had to acknowledge that, yes, Fischer had participated throughout. (Which no one should have doubted. The man is a born politician. He loves meetings.) And still more accusations from New Left days of yore came raining down on Joschka Fischer's respectable middle-aged head.

IT WAS NOT instantly obvious what drove Bettina Röhl to deliver the photographs to *Stern* and to dredge up her several hair-raising accusations. I looked at different European papers during the course of the affair, and I found a certain amount of political speculation, as could have been expected. Fischer's enemies in the Bundestag and at *Stern* tended



Joschka Fischer at a teach-in, 1973

to be, as I say, worthies of the conservative cause, who must have taken a fine partisan pleasure in making life miserable for a Green foreign minister. Yet the complications of contemporary politics are such that, on the left, too, Fischer had his enemies, who may have regarded him with an even deeper loathing.

Fischer had entered the government in 1998 as part of what is called the Red-Green coalition, meaning the alliance of the very big Social Democratic Party, the ancient Reds (whose organization was founded in 1875), and the much smaller Greens (whose organization was founded in 1979). To have forced the powerful and venerable Social Democrats into a coalition was, from the Green point of view, a great victory, and Fischer's arrival at the foreign ministry was bound to arouse jubilant expectations from the hardworking party activists. But here was the left-

wing difficulty. The Greens had made their way in German politics by sticking to their twin principles of ecology and anti-militarism. They were the enemies of the military policies of the United States, beginning in the days of President Reagan and advancing through the Gulf war of 1991 and onward to the present. Yet their year of political triumph, 1998, was not a happy one for the anti-militarist cause. The wars of Serbian nationalism had been getting grimmer and grimmer, and in 1998 the massacres took still another bad turn in Kosovo. NATO's involvement grew deeper and, from an anti-militarist perspective, more ominous. Many a Green looked to Fischer, as foreign minister, to oppose the NATO campaign, or at least to keep Germany, with its peaceful traditions in modern times, from taking part. But on matters of anti-militarism and NATO, Fischer was out of step with his own party. In his reasoning, the Serbian atrocities gnawed away at the pacifist logic. He looked at the ethnic persecutions, and came away thinking that military action was not such a bad idea, after all.

FISCHER WAS FILLED with conviction on this theme. And when he got into office he took the fundamental Green commitment to anti-war principles, deftly heaved it overboard, and gave his official endorsement to Germany's participation in the NATO effort. A large number of Greens could only look at those ministerial actions and feel horribly betrayed. To have spent nearly twenty years building a new party devoted to anti-militarism, only to see its first foreign minister endorse military action by NATO, the imperialist alliance! That was galling.

At the Green convention in 1999, someone threw a bag of red ink at Fischer and broke his eardrum. Four hundred police officers had to guard him when he got up to address the convention. His own party, the eco-pacifist assemblage, was a howling mob. The man did not lack for political skill, and he managed to hang onto the convention's support. But there was no placating a good percentage of his opponents. What was to be done about that? Nothing, nothing. And so, when the accusations against Fischer came rolling down upon him in the early months of 2001, it was easy to imagine that motives from the left, anti-militarist and anti-NATO, and not just the traditional hostility of his enemies on the right, might have been at work.

Then again, the fury against Fischer might have wended its way into the press from the remote margins of German political life, from the very far left well beyond the respectable democratic radicalism of

the Greens—the fury of ultra-militants who had remained in some way faithful to the legacy of Meinhof and her martyred guerrillas. Or perhaps the fury had its origin on the extreme right, from well beyond the respectable zones of Christian Democratic conservatism.

II.

BUT WHAT DID it mean in 2001, extreme right and extreme left? The ordinary political labels have gotten bollixed up in modern times, and not just in Germany. In poking around the Internet, I found my way to the electronic discussion center of the fans of the Baader-Meinhof Gang—they have their own website, naturally—and was interested to read about the curious case of Horst Mahler, one of the founders of the group back in 1970. Over the years, Mahler had slid down the corridor of extremist politics from left-wing terrorism into the circles of German neo-Nazism, where he set about promoting mad theories on Jewish themes. Such things did happen. And Mahler, as I discovered, entertained his own opinions about the Fischer affair. He made the argument that Ulrike Meinhof, had she lived, would have likewise slid over to the extreme right.

But in his view, as reported on the website, right-wing and left-wing counted for nothing as far as the behavior of Meinhof's daughter. The real animus against Fischer bubbled up instead from a daughter's anger at her inadequate mother, the prison martyr. Or else, as was more widely said, Röhl's anger at Fischer derived from a still vaguer resentment against the entire era of 1968—from the resentment that, on an earlier occasion, she had already described in the pages of *Der Spiegel*. For what was 1968 to Bettina Röhl?

It was the era that had deprived her of a childhood. Her mother, in the grip of the revolutionary manias of the time, had once tried to ship little Bettina and her sister to a Palestinian camp, only to have the girls' father, a publisher of left-wing (and somewhat pornographic) magazines, arrange to have them kidnapped en route and brought back to Germany—a horrible childhood event. Then the mother had gotten herself jailed, and had ended up dead—she suffered every tragedy of the era. As had the children, in their fashion.

And who was Joschka Fischer? Someone who had participated in the radical cause and gotten away scot-free; someone who managed to profit from every horrible thing that had taken place. This was the cause of Röhl's holy rancor, or so it was said. A victim's fury at a survivor. In any case, everyone could agree that, whatever her deepest motives might have been,

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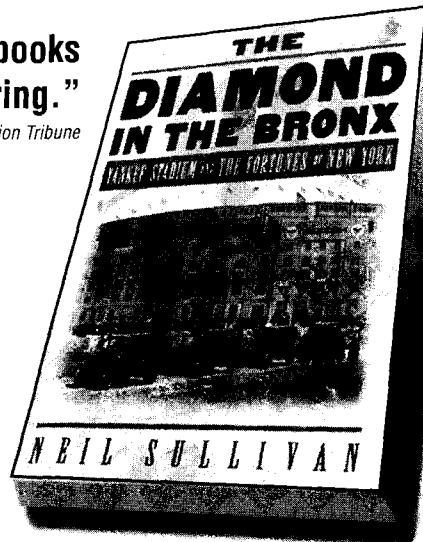
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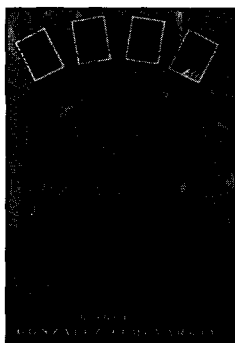
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Röhl had put a lot of vim and energy into her campaign. And no one could doubt that she had displayed a canny skill at inflicting the maximum personal damage, too—as if to prove that, with or without her famous mother, she was in her own right a real journalist.

ONE OF HER accusations pointed not at Fischer himself but slightly to his side, at an old roommate of his from the 1970s—another radical survivor, someone who had participated in nearly every phase of the movement, and had only managed to rise higher and higher in European life, and had suffered not one whit. This person was Daniel Cohn-Bendit, a well-known figure in Germany and all over Europe and beyond, even if, as a politician, he never achieved as lofty a post as Fischer. Cohn-Bendit was a man with an interesting childhood of his own. He was the son of German Jews, and he had spent his youth shuttling between West Germany and France. He attended university at Nanterre, outside Paris. And there, in the spring of 1968, he helped spark a series of student demonstrations, which sparked other demonstrations in Paris, which resulted, in May of that year, in a gigantic student uprising in Paris and all over France, which led in turn to a general strike by labor, which pretty much shut the country down for a while.

His hair was flaming red in those days, and he was witty and impish, and he became known as Danny the Red. He was the single best-known leader of the 1968 uprising, famous not just in France but everywhere in some degree, if only because the May uprising in Paris was the largest of the student uprisings anywhere in the world in that year, and because Paris was the capital of world revolution. Cohn-Bendit consequently had the experience of seeing himself elevated in a matter of weeks into the only person in any country who could claim to represent the generation of 1968 internationally, the human symbol of a worldwide seismic youth event—an odd personal fate for anyone to endure, an instant deification.

His legal citizenship, as it happened, was not French, but West German. And as soon as he made the mistake of stepping across the German border in 1968, the French authorities banished him from France. The leader of the French Communist Party, always a big enemy of the New Left, denounced Cohn-Bendit as a “German Jew,” which infuriated his admirers, who were many. Indignant crowds marched through the streets of Paris chanting, “We are all German Jews!”—a touching slogan, and a fine display of loyalty to Danny the Red. (At a right-wing

rally afterward, one of the slogans was “Cohn-Bendit—to Dachau!”) But there was no bringing him back to France, not for many years. He moved to Frankfurt.

He also roamed around a bit, stirring up trouble here and there. I ran into him in Britain in 1970. He sat on a hilltop and directed a small regiment of young French leftists, plus myself as translator, who invaded an Isle of Wight rock festival in the name of anti-capitalism, free rock music, and anti-clericalism. (The anti-clericalism struck me as odd, but those were our reasons.) Cohn-Bendit, our leader, was a mischievous guy. Mostly he stayed in Frankfurt, though. He set up house with Fischer.



Daniel Cohn-Bendit singing the “Internationale” to a policeman, May 1968

And, ever militant, Cohn-Bendit and Fischer organized a group called Revolutionärer Kampf, or Revolutionary Struggle, which was left-wing and counter-cultural both, a fixture of 1970s life in the happening districts of Frankfurt.

FISCHER WAS THE main leader of Revolutionary Struggle’s militant political activities, and Cohn-Bendit of its counter-cultural side. Fischer led the revolutionary mob in the streets, and Cohn-Bendit directed the revolution in daily life. His main activity was to run a kindergarten. He spent two years at it. Running a kindergarten might sound like an oddly modest thing for a famous revolutionary to do. But kindergartens were a big project for the German New

Left. The goal was nothing less than to perform radical surgery on the German national character. The traditional educational system in West Germany had followed the standard old-fashioned authoritarian model. And, in the New Left analysis, the standard model had succeeded all too well in times past at producing standard personalities—people who responded well to authority and knew how to give orders and how to take them, the kind of people who might grow up to be Nazis or to accept a government of Nazis without protesting. Good Germans, in a phrase. Authoritarian personalities.

So the New Left set out to construct a new kind of education—an anti-authoritarian education, beginning at the beginning, with the goal of creating anti-authoritarian personalities, people who would think for themselves and instinctively shrug off any attempt to impose a totalitarian domination. Sex education figured in the idea. The anti-authoritarian educators wanted to break down the sexual repression of earlier times—the sexual armor that, in their psychological figurings (with the help of Wilhelm Reich), had always surrounded the authoritarian personality. That was the idea behind the kindergarten campaign: the “anti-authoritarian kindergartens.” The teachers wanted to encourage the healthy sexuality of little children.

The idea was more than German, to be sure. The notion of breaking down old-fashioned personality types, the idea that early education offers a fulcrum for moving mankind, the campaign to build new kindergartens and schools on radical new principles—this was a big impulse in the English left, too, on its anarchist side. It was a venerable notion: Rousseau, Godwin, Dewey. It was big in the United States. One of the national leaders of America’s Students for a Democratic Society, Bill Ayers, began his radical career by organizing a proper elementary school—after which he hurled himself into the guerrilla campaign of the Weather Underground, after which, correcting himself, he hurled himself back into early childhood education.

In Frankfurt, Cohn-Bendit not only ran his kindergarten, he also wrote about it in a book directed at the French public that had so amiably chanted about being German Jews. The book was called *Le Grand Bazar* and it appeared in 1975. It was a loosely structured memoir of his life in the revolutionary movement, with chapters on the French student uprising, his own Jewish identity, his kindergarten, the objectionable nature of communism, and several other topics. It was full of the inflammatory phrases of the day. Then *Le Grand Bazar* faded from memory.

IN THE EARLY months of 2001, though, with the photographs of Fischer circulating in *Stern* and the many accusations of violent leftism surrounding him and a scent of scandal rising on every side, Bettina Röhl craftily plucked one of those inflammatory passages from Cohn-Bendit's book, declared the passage to be an undiscovered new outrage, and offered it for a fee (a tacky move) to the press. She approached *Libération* in Paris with her scoop. *Libération* declined to take her up on it, partly because the newspaper's policy was not to pay for news scoops, and partly because the book in question had been published long ago and could be freely quoted by anyone, but mostly because the paper's correspondent read the passage and, by interpreting it the way Cohn-Bendit had plainly intended, failed to see any scoop at all. *The Observer* in England did go for Röhl's item, and ran the excerpt. Then the item was picked up by *L'Express* in France, the *Bild Zeitung* in Germany, *La Repubblica* in Italy, and other papers.

The excerpt described Cohn-Bendit's kindergarten and was intended to illustrate the atmosphere of non-repression—the lengths to which the kindergarten teacher would go in order to prevent his little wards from looking on sex with fear. Cohn-Bendit had written: "It happened to me several times that certain kids opened my fly and began to tickle me. I reacted differently according to circumstances, but their desire posed a problem to me. I asked them: 'Why don't you play together? Why have you chosen me, and not the other kids?' But if they insisted, I caressed them even so."

In the context of the sexual liberation ideas of the 1970s, his larger point in writing those words was clear enough, and not without sense. He did explain in the book that, even in the most anti-authoritarian of kindergartens, children need instruction and cannot be allowed to do just as they please. He considered that adults ought to ponder the sexual questions long and hard, with regard to children. But that one sentence did make it seem that he himself was not exactly pondering anything. If you lifted that one passage from its context, Cohn-Bendit could easily be made to look like a pedophile—like an adult having sex with children. And this horrendous insinuation, the suggestion that Joschka Fischer's roommate, Danny the Red, the spirit of 1968 itself, had been, in fact, a pedophilic creep of the first order, a child molester—this dreadful insinuation ascended into the scandal of the hour in the French newspapers and on television.

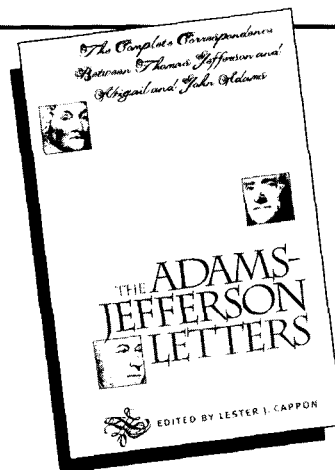
There was never any reason, none at all, to credit the accusation. A group of

parents of the kindergartners in Frankfurt plus some of the children themselves, now grown up, made public statements in praise and in defense of the teacher Cohn-Bendit. Not one person stood up to denounce him or to lodge any personal complaint. Cohn-Bendit himself, the Cohn-Bendit of 2001, was apoplectic about the accusation. He acknowledged in his riposte that the passage in his book had been written carelessly, in the provocative mode of the day. It was, he said, a "literary exaggeration," stupid, foolish, and shocking. Everything about the New Left, even its descriptions of kindergarten life, had been meant to provoke the wrath of the bourgeoisie. But he stressed that, during the friskier days of New Left wildness, whenever someone did try to make a case for pedophilia, as occurred from time to time (in the form of "man-boy love"), he was one of the people who spoke up right away in disapproval—he and the feminists and just about nobody else.

Pedophilia, Cohn-Bendit pointed out, has always been a shameful reality of traditional family life—the traditional life that conceals abysmal behavior under a blanket of silence, ignorance, and patriarchal authority. Pedophilia is the kind of scandalous reality that the sexual liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s tried to eliminate by making sexuality into something to be discussed honestly, without shame—by creating an anti-authoritarian atmosphere in which crimes and abuses would no longer be covered up in the name of filial obedience. Those were not foolish arguments on his part.

Surely he was right in pointing out that sexual liberation in the 1970s has turned out to be—notwithstanding the excesses and even the crimes that were sometimes committed in its name—one of the grand social advances of modern times, for women especially. Nowadays people can talk openly about pedophilia and other sexual abuses and depredations, as was rarely, if ever, possible during the two million years before the sexual revolution. Knowledge advances, ignorance recedes. There might even have been something heroic about Cohn-Bendit's devotion to the kindergarten. What other leader of a mass European uprising has ever turned from leading a revolutionary crowd in the streets to running a kindergarten? The new kind of masculinity needed a living example of how to behave, and Cohn-Bendit offered himself—someone unafraid to take up a role that had always been assigned to women. Any proposed revolution of daily life was going to depend on the willingness of men like him.

As it turned out, this particular accusation in the course of the Fischer affair, the insinuated charge against Cohn-



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Bendit, got nowhere at all back in Germany. The kindergarten in Frankfurt and the parents who had sent their children there and the children themselves were too well-known, and their refutations proved decisive. Besides, the experiment in anti-authoritarian education was conducted on a big scale in Germany in the 1970s and afterward, and large numbers of Germans had spent their infant years waddling through the hallways of that experiment and had come away understanding its goals and its methods as well as the sillier dogmas and the fads—the essays of Adorno ornamenting every anti-authoritarian classroom, that sort of thing. Familiarity bred respect (and perhaps a tolerant smile). To hang Cohn-Bendit on the basis of a single bad-sounding sentence in a book that no one remembered anymore did seem more than a trifle opportunistic. Even some of the conservative politicians in Germany spoke up for Cohn-Bendit's probity.

In France, a number of people likewise rebutted the insinuation, and right away, too. The host of a book-chat show on French television recalled that Cohn-Bendit had appeared on a panel in 1977 to discuss his book, and none of the other guests, not even the Catholic conservative, had thought to raise such an issue. It was pointed out that *L'Express*, which made such a convenient fuss over the accusation in 2001, had reviewed Cohn-Bendit's book when it originally came out and had found nothing objectionable at the time. And yet in France—and in other countries, too—the accusation about pedophilia, once it crept into the press, turned out to be a big event. Nasty journalists in the newspapers and at the television studios felt they could attach any sort of horrendous story or fantasy to the famous face from 1968, and have a swell time doing it, and feel no shame at all. Among journalists, such are the joys. Besides, newspapers must be sold and viewers attracted.

III.

BUT THE MAIN reason the smear about Cohn-Bendit spread in France and in a few other countries had to do with something more than yellow journalism. Serge July, the editor of *Libération* (and a Maoist from the good old days), put his finger on that reason right away. The insinuation lingered because, in France and in some other countries, it had lately become fashionable to hold up for inspection the radicalism of the period around 1968, and to search out the wildest episodes, some of which were wild enough, and to identify the radicalism as a whole with its most extreme

moments. And it had become fashionable to take the social and cultural problems of our own time and to blame those problems on the radicalism of the earlier period, as exemplified in its extremes.

This particular fashion may sound familiar to American ears, but in Europe in the later 1990s it acquired a tonality all its own, without any American echo or equivalent. The new tonality consisted of—this was the strange part—youthfulness, instead of age. There was a stylish young people's pining for a long-ago era of order and hierarchy, when every person occupied his allotted place, and rules were rules, and culture and language and relations between the sexes were properly fixed, and not, as they are today, so damnably fluid. The young people who indulged in that particular nostalgia yearned, in short, for the 1950s. (They could hardly yearn for the 1940s.) And since nostalgic yearning always turns out to be, on its obverse, an indignant protest, the people who pined for the 1950s ended up raging against the 1960s, amusing themselves with indignant recitations of every scandalous outrage that was committed—and even a few that were not committed—by their own parents and older siblings.

You could describe their complaints as a right-wing reaction. That may overstate the case, though. Mostly the young reactionaries wanted to stamp their feet. As July pointed out, hardly anyone actually wanted to roll back the social and cultural achievements of the New Left era. To send women back to the kitchen, to resume the persecution of homosexuals, to return to the days of secrecy about child molesting, to resurrect the old superstitions about race, or to reconstruct the European imperialisms (to name a few of the ancient customs and social structures that had been overthrown in the course of the New Left era)—no one seriously wanted to do any of that. To undo the reforms of an earlier age is always possible, if enough people feel suitably motivated; but the nostalgics of the 1990s merely wanted to reel with horror, and in that way to fend off the anxieties of the present age.

The writer Michel Houellebecq had a big success in 1998 in France, then in Germany and elsewhere, with a novel about the horrors of the 1960s called *The Elementary Particles* (which came out in the United States two years later). And his blood-curdling portraits of the radical weirdness of yore, combined with a sentimental yearning for 1950s-style family life, combined with his ever-popular scenes of modern sex orgies, accounted for Houellebecq's success. Disgusting sexual cruelty in the name of liberation, cult manias, radical murders: his book hit

every note of 1960s mayhem. The Fischer affair merely seemed to recapitulate in real life what Houellebecq had already imagined in his novel, down to the figure of Bettina Röhl, the distressed child of a New Left terrorist, who seemed to have stepped from his own pages. (If she had only read a bit further in Cohn-Bendit's *Le Grand Bazar*, she might have dug up a few sentences about group sex, too, and *The Elementary Particles* would have replayed itself in full.)

In the early months of 2001, then, it hardly mattered if any particular accusation against Fischer or Cohn-Bendit turned out to be unfounded. Either way, true or false, the accusations afforded a satisfying pleasure to anyone who felt a nostalgia for the excellent social order of long ago, and a resentment at the radicals who had so rudely overthrown the order in question. That was true in Germany just as in France. Feelings were expressed, even if truths were not told. The accusations constituted, as July put it, a "settling of accounts with the generation of 1968." And so the accusations and even the smears spread from Germany to France and outward to Britain and Italy and, in some degree, around the world, on the basis of a cultural anxiety that had nothing to do with the petty ideological and local concerns of Greens and Christian Democrats and other politicians in Germany who fretted over the career of the statesman Joschka Fischer.

AND THEN, HAVING floated upward into the airy zones of cultural anxiety, the Fischer affair suddenly sank into the concrete terrain of law. The legal issue came up at the trial of a New Left terrorist named Hans-Joachim Klein, who happened to be an old friend of Fischer's and Cohn-Bendit's in Frankfurt, from their days in Revolutionary Struggle in the early and middle 1970s.

The Fischer affair was a tale of people who had undergone life changes so vast as to be incomprehensible to outsiders. And among those many left-wing changelings, Klein was the king of kings. As a young man he had worked as an auto mechanic. He used to repair Cohn-Bendit's car. He followed Fischer to street demonstrations. He was one of the militants running to join Fischer in the grainy photographs from 1973—a tough character, not at all loath to mix it up with what we Americans used to call "the pigs." The terrorist wave rose in Germany, and Klein was carried aloft on the foam. When Sartre responded to Meinhof's letter by agreeing to visit Baader in the Stammheim prison, Klein served as his driver.

But he was no mere chauffeur. By then Klein was a secret soldier in a guerrilla

organization called the Revolutionary Cells, which was allied loosely with the Red Army Fraction and more tightly with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. One of the master achievements of the Revolutionary Cells was to help coordinate the Palestinian attack on the Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics in 1972. A New Leftist from Frankfurt made the arrangements. And in 1975 Klein and the Revolutionary Cells joined with Carlos the Jackal, the Argentine terrorist, to attack, in the name of "the Arab revolution," a meeting of OPEC oil ministers in Vienna. Three people were killed. Klein was shot in the stomach and the shoulder, but he and Carlos and some of the others made their escape in a plane to Algeria.

As time went on, though, Klein reflected on what he had done. And having reflected, he made the grave decision of deserting his terrorist comrades. He renounced his own activities and denounced the terrorist doctrine. He fled underground from the underground, hiding equally from the police and the Revolutionary Cells and all the other terrorists, who would surely have killed him, given the chance. (There was a case in West Germany of left-wing terrorists murdering one of their deserters.) Klein sought out his old friends who, unlike himself, had never taken the plunge into armed activity, and he pleaded his case, and they helped him. Cohn-Bendit was one of those people, together with the French "New Philosopher" André Glucksmann, who had been a well-known visitor at Fischer's and Cohn-Bendit's Revolutionary Struggle house in Frankfurt. Cohn-Bendit and Glucksmann and the handful of other people who aided Klein rather admired him for having reconsidered his violence and for speaking out against his own comrades, the terrorists.

His friends helped him to settle in France. Sometimes they paid his rent. They tried to keep up his spirits. He lived in a little Norman village. He even wrote a book, and he granted a clandestine interview to Cohn-Bendit for a television documentary. In 1998, though, just three days before he was going to turn himself in under an arrangement that Cohn-Bendit had helped to broker, Klein was tracked down by the French police, who delivered him to the German authorities. His trial in Germany took place, by unhappy coincidence, just as the Fischer affair got under way in January 2001. He was sentenced to nine years.

But before the trial reached its end, Fischer was called to testify, not in his capacity as foreign minister but as a private citizen. He was asked about his relationship to Klein back in New Left times. Fischer explained that in those days he tried to talk Klein out of joining the terrorists. And when Fischer had finished making his statement, he walked over to Klein in his defendant's chair and shook the man's hand. The handshake seemed innocent enough, given that, as Fischer had just testified, Klein was an old friend, and the old friend had long ago denounced his own crimes and was now about to expiate them. Even so, next day in the Bundestag,



Hans-Joachim Klein at his trial, January 2001

Fischer was asked to explain himself.

There was worse. In the course of his testimony, Fischer was accused of having harbored people from the Red Army Fraction in his house. The accusation infuriated him. He told the court: "Next we will hear that Daniel Cohn-Bendit and I organized World War III in that house!" He wanted to draw a thick line between his own leftism and the terrorists—to show that in those days you could have been a revolutionary militant and still not have had any truck with murderers and kidnapers. But Fischer's insistence on this point turned out to be untrue. A woman named Margrit Schiller, who had served jail time for her connections to the Red Army Fraction, wrote an autobiography in 1999, in

which she plainly stated that she had spent a "few days" in the early 1970s living in the Revolutionary Struggle house. She visited the house out of curiosity. She wanted to see who these Revolutionary Struggle people were. She did see them, including Fischer himself. This awkward bit of information emerged in the aftermath of Fischer's testimony, and Fischer had to acknowledge that Margrit Schiller's assertion must have been correct.

The discrepancy did not seem especially damning. All kinds of visitors were always traipsing through the house in Frankfurt. Abbie Hoffman was there; Jerry Rubin came to visit. Who could remember every last person who had ever stopped by? But the news about a Red Army Fraction woman only managed to underline yet again how close Fischer, in his younger days, had been to the terrorists. And the revelation gave an opening to the prosecutor at the Klein trial. The prosecutor had already shown a nasty hostility to Fischer during his testimony; he had even been rebuked for it by the judge. Now the prosecutor charged Fischer with perjury. The Bundestag was put in the position of having to decide whether to lift Fischer's ministerial immunity and allow him to be tried on the perjury charge.

So Fischer faced a legal problem, and not just a public relations problem or a political problem, in the wake of those many accusations and scandals and insinuations. And with one scandal piling on another, the photographs, the resurrected accusations, the new accusations, the denials, the retractions, the outright smears, the undeniable acquaintance with more than one authentic bomb-thrower, and finally the perjury charge—with all of that, the general public was bound to gaze on

Fischer with a nervous apprehension. What kind of man could this Joschka Fischer be? People did have to wonder.

Fischer's evolution was plainly a lot stranger and more extreme than might have seemed to be the case. He was not just a peacenik politician who in the fullness of time had metamorphosed into a NATO supporter—as had been widely believed, given his origins in the Greens. His political origins reached back to the era before there was any such thing as a Green. He was a street-fighting militant, someone on the fringe of terrorist New Leftism, a rough-and-ready revolutionary, who then became a Green, and then a NATO supporter, someone who had changed his colors not once but twice—or who knew how

many times?—someone whose history was populated with tough and sinister characters from the left-wing underworld.

IV.

DIDN'T THE SEVERAL mysteries of his past political life suggest (as his political enemies insisted) that Fischer might, in fact, be a man without character? Didn't his political zig-zags reveal a Machiavelli of the worst sort? A man desperate for power, someone who would adopt any position whatsoever, if only it would bring him what he wanted? That was how Fischer began to seem in other countries, including in our own far-away part of the world. Even before the scandal broke, Fischer was presented in *The New York Times Magazine* by the German pundit Josef Joffe as "a bit of a Forrest Gump," someone whose "business" is "self-reinvention"—which sounded friendly enough, until you stopped to think about it.

Then the waves of scandal rolled in, and Roger Cohen of the *Times*, one of the paper's most astute correspondents, duly reported in the news section that Fischer was, in fact, "a man of startling changes, not least in his views on the use of force," which was certainly true. But the startling changes were bound to arouse a few worries about the man, especially if he was Forrest Gump. Some of those worries cropped up on the *Times* editorial page, whose editors felt sufficiently upset by the incriminating photographs and by some of the accusations to devote a small commentary to the affair. The *Times* editors concluded that Fischer, in their words, "should be allowed to continue serving his country"—which was not too surprising, given that his foreign policy had been controversial in Germany precisely in the degree to which it coincided with that of the United States. Not quite satisfied, however, the editors added the cautionary phrase "barring more damaging revelations"—as if one more telling photograph, or one persuasive proof that he did tell people to throw Molotov cocktails back in 1976, might have tipped the balance against him.

And who could blame the editors for having registered their careful reservation? For if Fischer were, in truth, a man without principles, a man whose history consisted of shadows and hidden crimes and whose business was self-reinvention, there would have been reason enough to fret over the power that he could wield from his desk at the foreign ministry in Berlin. But it was also obvious that, beneath the day-to-day politics, a deeper worry was all along trailing through this affair.

IT WAS A nagging worry about the radicalism of the years around 1968 and its crazier episodes. Even some of us who went through a few of those episodes can hardly believe, looking back, that such things could have taken place. Might not a few dark after-effects from those days have lingered into the present? You could find yourself worrying that question even without pining for the arcadia of the 1950s. Out of the dark violence of the student left of three decades ago, might not a faintly criminal stain, a shiftiness, maybe a touch of ruthlessness, have crept across certain personalities and left an indelible mark?

The worry went well beyond poor old Fischer at the foreign ministry. In Germany under the Red-Green coalition, a greater number of veterans of the New Left had risen to power than in any other country among the big Western powers—risen through the Greens or else through the Social Democrats, where some of the New Left Marxists, having abandoned their revolutionary leftism, eventually found a home. Gerhard Schröder, the chancellor, used to be something of a radical socialist himself, before making his way into the safely popular regions of Social Democracy's "Third Way." Such was the long march through the institutions.

So Fischer, in all his flashiness, proved to be a representative figure in these matters. That was why it was reasonable to think of the Fischer affair as the trial of the generation of 1968—to see in it a challenge to an enormous cohort of people who had fashioned their personal characters in the years of New Left rebellion. And it did seem, for a while, that the challenge was going to prevail, and that Fischer would sooner or later have to accept the price of his young man's wildness, hang his head in shame, and submit his resignation, just as his enemies were dearly hoping.

But not so fast. The letters pages of German newspapers began to fill with dispatches from middle-aged worthies from the business world and the learned professions who confessed that they, too, had waged the revolution back in the years around 1968, and then had grown up and had sanded down the sharp edge of their views, just as Fischer had done, and Germany's foreign minister ought not to be persecuted for what happened long ago. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, a conservative paper, published an essay by the poet Charles Simic shaking his head over the hypocrisies of conservative indignation. If only Fischer had become a stockbroker or a college professor, Simic observed, nobody at all would have complained about his left-wing background. If only he had become, like so many

ex-radicals from the 1960s, a right-wing newspaper columnist! The most amazing vote of support came from Fischer's own victim, the white-helmeted policeman in the photographs from 1973, whose name turned out to be Rainer Marx. Fischer telephoned Marx to apologize for the gruesome beating in the Frankfurt parking lot, and Marx found admiring words to say about Fischer's conduct of foreign policy. Nor did Fischer seem to be collapsing in the polls.

BUT THERE WAS something about Fischer's ability to survive the scandal that aroused still other worries, nameless and deep, touching on matters well beyond the mayhem of the New Left. For what might it say about Germany if, faced with some hair-raising accusations and the dreadful photographs, the German people ended up supporting their foreign minister with more enthusiasm instead of less? What would it mean if the worse Fischer seemed, the more he was applauded? Americans have had some experience with that kind of question. The Clinton sex scandal hit its stride in the same year that Fischer became foreign minister, and week by week Clinton's personal behavior was revealed in ever more pornographic detail. Most Americans seemed to recognize intuitively that their president's sex life had followed an ancient if undistinguished tradition of husbandly wandering, and had no bearing on state policy or the fate of the nation, and was finally not the public's business—which was why Clinton's popular ratings remained high, and rose even higher when his persecutors had their say.

Yet Clinton's conservative enemies, some of them, saw in his behavior something much more worrisome. They saw a shadow of the 1960s and its radical subversion of (as they imagined it) basic morality, a left-wing undermining of eternal principles of behavior, a menace to civilization. The right-wing accusation against the radicalism of the 1960s has always been a bit more shrill and intense in the United States than in Europe, and as the Clinton scandals unfolded, the conservatives in America grew ever more upset, not just at the sinning president but at the all-tolerant American public. What could it mean, the conservatives had to ask, that Clinton's legal situation was tottering and his public support was firming up? His popularity seemed to hint at something monstrous: that America had been corrupted in its ethics by the horrible radicals of the 1960s. The American public seemed to have sunk into a swamp of moral indifference, even depravity. Right and wrong had disappeared into a marshy haze. And the conservatives grew wide-

eyed in astonishment and horror.

The deeper worry that ran through the Fischer affair had something in common with that conservative American fear, only in a German version that seemed infinitely more sinister. Some of the commentators on the Fischer affair made the quiet suggestion that, if Germany's foreign minister were shown to be a man without character, and if the Germans ended up applauding him anyway, as did seem to be happening, it was because, in Germany, any number of people were living in the shadow of their own shameful political pasts, and the country was long ago shorn of its ability to make moral judgments, and nothing was to be done about it. Such was the implication, quietly hinted. Germany: a country incapable of looking things square in the face. Germany: a country unwilling to confront its own history. And, to be sure, in Germany's case, something in that suggestion did catch the eye.

Watching the Fischer affair unfold through the early months of 2001 was like studying a painting where your attention first focuses on the main subject at the center of the canvas, and then you begin to notice the background and how interesting it is, and then you notice, reflected in a piece of metal or seen through a window, a second background, which you can barely see. The main subject in the Fischer affair was a simple political scandal of the present day involving a well-regarded government minister. But the scandal was set against a background consisting of events from twenty-five or thirty years ago, from the time of the New Left. The Fischer affair invited us, even required us, to make a few judgments about that background.

But the New Left background turned out, on closer inspection, to have a background of its own, barely visible, which was the Germany of long before. Not the generation of 1968, but the generation of 1938. Not the New Left, but the Nazis. The whole difficulty in making sense of the affair was to figure out what possible tale or narrative could account for all three of those elements: today's foreign minister in the foreground, the New Left behind him, and, half-hidden, the background of the background, yesterday's yesterday, bathed in darkest shadow.

V.

EVERYONE KNOWS WHAT the Nazism of the 1930s and 1940s was. But what was the New Left of the 1960s and 1970s, in its motives, instincts, and goals, in its spirit? The decades come and go, and on that question no consensus has been achieved, none at all, not in Europe and not in America. That was why

the Fischer affair went leaping from country to country, arousing different controversies in each new place. It was mad cow disease in the form of an argument about the past. It turned out to be a rather useful argument, too. Questions were raised; perhaps a few lessons were learned. And what were those lessons? I will give my faraway, trans-Atlantic interpretation.

The New Left was a young people's movement motivated by fear. Naturally, not just by fear. New Leftists all over the world knew very well that, in the decades after World War II, European imperialism was steadily collapsing around the world and certain kinds of social progress were advancing nicely in the Western countries, and might go on advancing, too, given a proper left-wing push. Utopian cheerfulness was a sunbeam that fell here and there. Yet fear swallowed all. It was a fear that, at least in the Western countries, social progress rested on a lie, a fear that prosperity was theft, and Western wealth was Third World exploitation; a fear that Western civilization comprised a system of manipulation designed to mislead its own people and everyone else—an iron cage cleverly designed to resemble the open air of freedom.

The social optimism of the New Left drew on visible realities of world history, and so, too, did the fear. New Leftists all over the world looked at the United States. They saw that America's ancient prejudices against blacks had come under challenge. But the spectacle of America trying to reform itself succeeded only in revealing how persistent were the ancient prejudices, and therefore how limited and false must be America's claim on democratic virtue. New Leftists gazed also at Vietnam. The fighting there had the look of a colonial war in an extremely ugly version—a war no less racist under the Americans than under the French imperialists, except with a Madison Avenue smarminess (“defense of the free world”) and a terrifying industrial face. American bomber planes overhead and cone-hatted rice farmers down below made an unbearable spectacle. And the smarmy slogans together with the old-fashioned race hatreds and the technological ghastliness—all of this aroused a dread, finally, that pointed to the terrors of the past.

It was a fear, in sum, that in World War II, fascism, and more specifically Nazism, had not been defeated after all—a fear that Nazism, by mutating, had continued to thrive into the 1950s and 1960s and onward, always in new disguises. It was a fear that Nazism had grown into a modern system of industrial rationality geared to irrational goals—a Nazism of racial superstitions committing the same massacres as in the past, a Nazism declaiming a

language of democracy and freedom that had no more human content than the old-fashioned rhetoric of *Lebensraum* and Aryan superiority. And so the New Left in its youthful anxiety found its way to an old and mostly expired panic from its parents' generation, and bent over it, and fanned the dead embers, and breathed on them, and watched aghast as the ancient flames leaped up anew.

In each country where the New Left happened to flourish, the revived panic over a newly discovered, cleverly disguised, still-flourishing Nazism seemed to be confirmed by strictly local circumstances, each country in its own fashion. France in the early 1960s kept trembling on the brink of a right-wing coup d'état, and right-wing bombs exploded in central Paris, and French soldiers and police committed massacres and atrocities in Algeria, and a black cloud of those events hung over France well into the 1970s. In Italy, the New Leftists looked at their own neighborhoods and schools and even at their own families and saw with perfect accuracy that the social structures and cultural habits and ways of thought from Mussolini times had merely been covered over, as with a drop cloth. But no one gazed at the everyday vistas before their eyes with more pain and anger than the New Leftists of West Germany.

THE NEW LEFTISTS there could see all too clearly that West Germany's conservative parties were comfortably maintaining quite a few continuities with right-wing customs of the past, and that big-time industrial figures from Nazi times were big-time industrial figures still, and that society had not entirely changed hands. Even the gas chambers retained a patriotic luster in the eyes of many a knuckleheaded West German curmudgeon, such that when the New Leftists marched in the streets, here and there an ornery old burgher could be counted on to mutter, “You should go to the gas chambers!”—more or less the way that in the United States some Neanderthal throwback to the McCarthy era would always be heckling, “Go back to Russia!” (And we Americans thought we had it bad.) In most countries, when the New Leftists described their enemies as Nazis, they knew that Nazism was a figure of speech. But West Germany was beyond metaphor.

The New Leftists there noticed that even the socialists had made their peace with German society, and that no one in the Social Democratic Party seemed to be trying too hard to root out the holdovers from Nazi times. Such were their observations. Maybe they were unjust. Sometimes they were on the mark. Of the

many crimes committed by the Red Army Fraction, the most famous of all was the cold-blooded execution of Hans-Martin Schleyer, the president of the West German employers' federation, who turned out to have been a top SS officer in Prague during the Nazi occupation. And with a disguised Nazism apparently in command at home and across the Western world circa 1968, the need for an extremely radical resistance seemed to cry out from every stone. What was New Leftism, then? It was—it pictured itself as—Nazism's opposite and nemesis: the enemy of the *real* Nazism, the Nazism that had survived Nazism, the Nazism that was built into the foundations of Western life. And how did the New Left intend to act on that idea, with what tools and what ideas?

THE COMMENTATORS ON Fischer and his photographs and his terrorist acquaintances, in looking back on those years, tended to shrink the New Left and its practical and philosophical quandaries into a straightforward argument about violence and non-violence—about tactics, by and large. And, having divided the movement along tactical lines, the commentators wanted to know: was Fischer in his hotheaded youth a good New Leftist, meaning non-violent, or (as the photographs and the accusations made seem likely) a bad New Leftist? But those questions, asked head-on, were never going to shed much light on the man himself or on the movement. This was because New Leftism in its fear and its panic was always a super-emotional movement, and the charged sentiments undid any chance for lucid discussion, and the arguments for violence and non-violence kept slipping illicitly into one another's arms, though you wouldn't think it possible.

In our own country, to cite a humbling example, some of the most notoriously violent street protests of the late 1960s and early 1970s, during the mass mobilizations against the war in Vietnam, were led by the die-hard opponents of all violence whatsoever—by militants of absolute pacifism who, in their Christian zeal, chose to stand shoulder to shoulder with the helmeted warriors of sidewalk mayhem. And the helmeted warriors ran into the street and did what even the pacifists expected them to do. Were the pacifists good and the window-smashers bad? You may think so, but those people were arm-in-arm, and their differences shriveled at times to such tiny proportions as to seem mere variations in style, the pious and the polite over here, the blasphemous and the rude over there, each complicit with the other: good cop, bad cop.

The truly fundamental debates within the New Left, the arguments that really

mattered about the crypto-Nazism of modern life and how to confront it, the arguments that finally did lead to violence or that led away—*those* arguments broke down along lines that, in their origins, had very little to do with tactics. They were arguments about worldviews, about what it meant to be a leftist and what sort of world the left wanted to create—philosophical arguments, you could say. Those particular arguments tended to remain somewhat muted in the early years of the New Left, when tempers were relatively cool and the student movement was content to remain a student movement.

But the heat rose season by season, and by 1969 or thereabouts the New Left had lost any sense of balance that it might once have had—lost its balance because the Vietnam War had intensified and the anti-colonial movement seemed about to erupt in social and racial cataclysms here and there around the world, and because a good many New Leftists had by then undergone their own unhappy run-ins with the police, which led to dizzy spells of rage and tantrum. And the movement lost its old tranquility because many a simple-souled activist wanted to make the transition from student to grown-up and stop fiddling around—wanted to put together an adult movement capable of wrestling the old society to the ground.

VI.

IN EACH COUNTRY around the world, some of the central figures from the student ranks, having grown older and more frustrated, set out to do just that, mostly by trying to organize a full-scale revolutionary movement, something that could no longer be described as a young person's merry carnival. Only what could that mean in the world of 1969 and the early 1970s? A revolutionary movement? In what fashion? In the Western countries the New Left, stroking its chin, contemplated three main alternatives.

The crudest of those alternatives, the least imaginative, was simply to revert to the old-fashioned sectarian Marxism of the 1930s and to go about fighting Nazism in exactly the way that people had done in the past, by organizing disciplined, Leninist structures based on obedience, dedication, and self-sacrifice, the dream words of the Great Depression, and in this manner to sink into a sepia-toned memory of long ago. Leftism, too, can be a nostalgia cult. (Leftism may be the greatest nostalgia cult of all.) Resurrecting the 1930s turned into quite an enormous campaign around the world. Even in the United States, where the Marxist and Leninist traditions were venerable but never especially strong, some fifteen thousand New

Leftists are estimated to have enlisted in the minuscule retro-Marxist sects, Trotskyist or Stalinist (though the Stalinists called themselves Maoists), which is no small number, if you consider that enlisting meant accepting the rigors of party discipline and not just sending in a dues payment or showing up at a meeting now and then.

I do not know exactly how many people embarked on that sort of project in West Germany, but the figures would have been larger, much larger. The yearning for a heroic Marxist past—for the heroic past that had failed in Germany to be sufficiently heroic, that had failed to beat down the Nazi challenge—became irresistible in the German student movement. Rosa Luxemburg, the martyr, became a goddess. And the students were drawn to old-fashioned Marxism for another reason. The New Left in West Germany had originally taken shape in response to the Federal Republic's banning in 1956 of the West German Communist Party, a political event that allowed the students to feel that a heritage from the past had been denied them: the heritage that was flowering (they liked to imagine) in the part of Germany that *was* struggling against the Nazi legacy, in the morally superior part, the egalitarian and civilized part—in the other part, that is: in East Germany.

THE PRINCIPAL WEST GERMAN student movement happened to be called SDS (which, coincidentally, were also the initials of the principal American organization of the New Left). In 1969, under the pressure of the revolutionary mood and the worldwide student uprising, the German SDS dissolved. The students from that organization, in their search for an adult politics, went about forming any number of brand-new Marxist-Leninist parties—a new party in every city, it sometimes seemed. That became a big tendency in West Germany, bigger there than in France and the other countries of the West.

And yet retro-Marxism was never New Leftism's main impulse. A much larger number of people took up the second alternative, a Marxism that was distinctly of the 1960s and 1970s: the Marxism of Castro, Che, Ho, and Mao, mixed with a few doctrines of the Frankfurt School. This was a modern Marxism, free of retro touches. The people who took it up sometimes went about organizing militant parties of their own, but mostly they cultivated their radical aspirations in a cheerfully provisional mood, awaiting the arrival of the true, well-organized revolutionary party of the future, and meanwhile biding their time in the agreeable fashion of the young. "Please, God, make

me chaste, but not yet!" Modern Marxism was for this reason mostly a left-wing milieu without formal structures or central commands or any way of coordinating itself—a big milieu, though.

As for New Leftism's third alternative, it was fundamentally anarchist—a libertarian impulse that sometimes drew on the nineteenth-century pamphlets of Bakunin and Kropotkin, sometimes on the early-twentieth-century writings of Anton Pannokoek and the councilists, sometimes on the contemporary but equally obscure pamphlets of the "autonomists" in Italy and the *Socialism or Barbarism* group and the Situationists in France. But most often it drew on nothing at all, on a breeze blowing through the university neighborhoods and on rumors from the California counterculture.

The libertarianism was typically less than libertarian. It was anarchist-leaning—or, as the French say, *anarchisant*—cultural more than political, oblivious to economics, a libertarianism under constant siege by the doctrines of the retro-Marxists and especially of the modern Marxists—a libertarianism that turned out to be, as a result, blithely inconsistent. The *anarchisants* of the New Left kept falling for the Third Worldist fantasies of the modern Marxists, kept wanting to celebrate Ho or some other tropical Communist as a hero of the libertarian cause—an odd thing to do. The *anarchisants* spoke about freedom and personal autonomy and, at the same time, nodded respectfully at the self-sacrifice of Che Guevara, whose unmentionable achievement was to have established Soviet-style prison camps in Cuba. An anarchist salt and a Marxist pepper, sprinkled together.

COHNBENDIT SPOKE for this third alternative. His own libertarianism was more sophisticated, and therefore more frankly anti-Communist, than that of almost everyone else in the New Left outside of the tiny, old-school anarchist sects. He could draw on a solid acquaintance with the old-time anarchist groups and the revolutionary tradition that in France went back to Proudhon, a venerable heritage. And the venerable heritage did have its wisdom, which was available to him even as a college student. Lenin's crimes were a revelation to everyone in the left-wing world, it sometimes seemed, but they were no revelation to the heirs of French anarchism. They already knew the awful truth.

Cohn-Bendit knew better than to sigh for the Popular Front. He was not a man for Mao buttons. He was a lot clearer than Fischer on these questions, back in the New Left days. (Cohn-Bendit has explained that, when he arrived in Frank-

furt after his expulsion from France, he was surprised by how great the Stalinist influence on the German left was, by how little the German radicals knew about the true nature of communism.) The phrase "visceral anti-communism" would have sounded terrible, even fascistic, in the ears of many a person in the movement; but Cohn-Bendit was happy with the phrase and applied it to himself. He filled his writings with all kinds of angry denunciations of the Soviet Union and Lenin and the Marxist-Leninist political tradition. *Le Grand Bazar*, the book that got him in so much trouble in the early months of 2001, was largely an anti-Communist tract.

Then again, in the spirit of inconsistency, even Cohn-Bendit made himself at home with all kinds of people who could never have postulated anti-communism as a New Left principle. Those were his limitations. Or perhaps those were the limitations of the movement: Cohn-Bendit would have cut himself off from an enormous number of people if he had insisted on anti-Communist principles at every moment. He was a great fan of the freak scene in the United States, which he instinctively knew to be anarchist at heart, allergic to bureaucracies, allergic to anything like a Marxist-Leninist centralized organization—a movement devoted to individual expression and to the expansion of personal freedom in every possible dimension, plus a few other dimensions. The freak scene in America was surely the biggest of all the libertarian currents around the world in those years, and its size and friskiness excited his enthusiasm. America's freaks and Hollywood's Westerns were a sort of ideal for him. He recommended their virtues in *Le Grand Bazar*. But then, America's freaks were just as inconsistent as anyone else among the New Left libertarians around the world. You could see the confusion in someone such as Abbie Hoffman, whose level of education in matters of left-wing lore was fairly low, and who therefore tended to be rather gullible about Third World communism. Hopelessly gullible, in fact. Hoffman was an anarchist who knew zero about anarchism.

No single phrase denoted the New Left's libertarian current around the world. The word that Fischer liked to use in West Germany (as I see from an interview that he gave to Cohn-Bendit back in the mid-1980s) was the humorously clunky "anarcho-Mao-spontex"—an expressive phrase covering all bases. "Anarcho" meant the old tradition of the anarchist movements of the past. "Mao" meant an imaginary Mao—a Mao who, unlike the real Mao, was not a totalitarian. "Spontex" meant "spontaneist"—against formal

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organizations and against the bureaucratic and military discipline of the Marxist sects. Or, abbreviating, the doubly-hyphenated phrase could be rendered as "sponti," which was German for what we Americans meant by "freak," more or less.

The "sponti scene" in Frankfurt meant the housing squatters whom Fischer used to lead around the streets, together with the "alternative" journals such as Cohn-Bendit's *Pflasterstrand*, or "Under the Pavement, the Beach!" The sponti scene meant the teachers at the "anti-authoritarian" schools, the street-corner layabouts, the politicized dope-smokers, and the avant-garde in the arts, except for the people who could more comfortably fit under a label of conventional Marxist—a big scene, block after block in Frankfurt and Berlin, the sponti capitals.

I do not mean to suggest that those three grand tendencies of the New Left, post-1968—retro-Marxists, modern Marxists, inconsistent libertarians—kept themselves in neatly separated columns. Events and fads came in torrents, and atop the waves people bobbed about from one tendency to another. Still, the debates that went on within the New Left, the crucial argument over violence and non-violence, had to take place within categories of thought that were shaped by those fluid tendencies. The outside world sometimes had a little trouble in making sense of the New Left for that reason.

ON THE TOPIC of violence—back to that now—it was a convention of the bourgeois press in the late 1960s and 1970s to take the notorious old label of "anarchist" and paste it across every sort of left-wing scuffle, especially the acts of terror. A volume of clips from *The New York Times* lies before me as I write, and I see the headlines and the phrases: "Anarchist Leaders Seized in Frankfurt" (announcing the 1972 arrest of Andreas Baader and three other comrades of the Red Army Fraction). Or this, from the same year: "Miss Meinhof, thirty-seven years old, has been considered the leading ideologist of an anarchist group calling itself the Red Army Fraction..."

But the Red Army Fraction was not an anarchist group, nor was anarchism a main inspiration for New Left violence. A minor inspiration, yes. The June 2nd Movement in West Germany (which kidnapped a Christian Democratic politician), the Angry Brigade in Britain, and the Direct Action group in France were armed action groups that could plausibly claim an anarchist background. Some of the people in the Black Liberation Army in the United States (which came out of the Black Panthers) likewise invoked an

anarchist origin. Anarchism's share of the violence of the New Left was, even so, strictly minimal. The bourgeois press had it wrong. The true inspiration for the guerrilla or terrorist groups on the New Left was overwhelmingly Marxist—not in the retro-style of the traditional Marxist organizations (traditional Marxism, dating back to Marx, always regarded terrorism with absolute disdain), but in the modern style.

The modern Marxists looked on life in the Western countries as hopelessly tainted and on Western society as inherently dreadful. They subscribed to the economic analyses of dependency theory, according to which the Western exploitation of everybody else around the world appears to be unavoidable, owing simply to the laws of economic survival under capitalism, and not to some streak of cruelty or thoughtlessness that could be overcome. The modern Marxists, having studied their Frankfurt School texts, saw in Western culture an impermeable wall of total oppression. Hopelessly exploitative in economic matters, hopelessly mendacious and manipulative in cultural matters—that was Western society. What could anyone do but heave a bomb and hope for the best? A proper bomb might blow a hole in the Western web of total oppression.

Some people did manage not to draw those particular conclusions. Herbert Marcuse himself stood up against the Red Army Fraction, and did it in *The New York Times* to boot, just in case anyone might fail to notice what position he was taking. Still, the terrorist logic, such as it was, drew on a Marcusean social criticism: the criticism that saw no hope at all in Western society. There was another line of argument: guerrilla action seemed a useful way to support the Third World liberation fighters, who were guerrillas themselves. "Be like Che," the Fidelista slogan, meant that you too should die a warrior. Then, too, in the case of the Irish and Basque terrorists and a few other people fighting miniature wars of national liberation, violence offered an encouraging sign that Ireland or the Basque country or some other benighted province of the West might be able to slip away into the Third World, where the sunny rays of a beautiful social revolution were far more likely to dawn.

SUCH WERE MODERN Marxism's guerrilla arguments. They had the curious effect of leading the guerrillas and the people who supported them to look sympathetically on the Soviet Union, even if without much enthusiasm. The armed Marxist organizations in the Western countries, if they intended to be

at all serious, did need a helping hand—logistical support, military training, a place to which hard-pressed guerrillas could flee. And where to find that kind of help if not from East Germany, or Czechoslovakia, or Cuba, or some other country of the Soviet bloc, or else from one of the Arab countries that enjoyed Soviet backing? And what is logistical support if not moral support?

That was definitely how the guerrilla argument ran in West Germany. Meinhof's defense of terrorism leaned on the Frankfurt School Marxists, who were not especially friendly to the Soviets and sometimes were quite hostile; but on the Soviet question Meinhof drew her own conclusions, which were positive. The Soviet Union: a progressive force in world history. Really, how could she think otherwise? The East German secret services paid good money to keep the Red Army Fraction afloat in West Germany, and there was every reason to feel grateful.

The gap between the New Left terrorists in their modern Marxist version and the New Left libertarians was, in a small word, big. The libertarians detested the Soviet Union, even if they deceived themselves about the un-Soviet nature of Communist regimes in tropical regions of the world, about which everyone felt free to fantasize. The libertarians never imagined that Western society was hopelessly oppressive. The libertarians went about building the freak neighborhoods and the sponti scene on the palpable assumption that Western society, in its accordion flexibility, could be stretched and squeezed to play a few melodic variations on "alternative" themes. The libertarians never expected to storm the Winter Palace. The hippie-dippies—they were much too culturally minded for that. The several modern Marxist reasonings that led to a New Left terrorism therefore tended to escape them.

Then again, like the Marxists, the libertarians did find themselves in a fury over local events and foreign wars and the state of modern life. They chucked rocks at the police, and the police clubbed them back, and then some. That was Fischer's experience: beaten by the police at a demonstration in 1968. And from behind their overturned cars and makeshift barricades, the libertarians, nursing their bruises, had to wonder: why stop at rocks? Or at Molotov cocktails? They scratched their long-haired heads. They were not *entirely* resistant to the terrorist argument. So they dithered. That was the characteristic response. Meanwhile they labored at building their communes, kindergartens, food co-ops, new gender relations, and other elements of the New Left utopia in its counter-cultural

version. Or else they followed the retro-Marxist example and colonized the factories in search of proletarian followers. They mooned nostalgically over the anarcho-syndicalist vision of a revolutionary general strike. And they never did take the terrorist plunge. Or they dipped a toe in and out. This was the situation in the early and mid-1970s. And at that moment the great black clouds of New Left moodiness and rage that had been gathering for a good ten years began to break up, all over the Western world.

VII.

THE MOOD CHANGED because the United States began pulling out of Vietnam, beginning in 1972, which tamped down the New Left hysteria; and because President Nixon, who managed to incite panic everywhere he went, soon enough began his long, slow fall from power. Watergate did wonders for democracy's prestige, and the refurbished prestige tamped down the hysteria still more. Maybe America was not unredeemably horrible, after all; maybe Hollywood's Westerns and California's marvelous hippies were the true America, and Richard Nixon was part of a false America that was going down to defeat. And just as those encouraging American trends were getting under way, two very shocking developments took place, which quickly sobered up large numbers of people in the New Left all over the world, and perhaps the libertarians most of all.

The first of those developments involved the Palestinians and their struggle against Zionism, and it requires a little explanation. The war of Arab nationalism against Zionism had been going on since the turn of the twentieth century or even earlier, and, in ideological terms, had already flip-flopped several times in the eyes of the European left, such that left-wing had turned into right-wing, and vice versa, and back again. The early Zionist settlers, being solid European socialists or anarchists, basked in the sympathy of at least some portions of the European left. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, however, the world Communist movement came out in favor of the Arab resisters. Then, in the 1940s, both the Communists and the democratic left in Europe returned to, or re-affirmed, their original sympathy for Zionism—only to have things switch again in the 1950s, when Israel lined up as an ally of the British and French imperialists.

The 1967 war, in which the Israelis seized a lot of land, seemed to confirm Israel's imperialist nature. The Soviets became fierce enemies of Zionism. Palestinian Marxists stepped forward. Soviet

resources poured in. And under those circumstances the New Left came up with one more interpretation of the Middle Eastern conflict, in which the New Left's vision of a lingering Nazism of modern life was suddenly re-configured, with Israel in a leading role. Israel became the crypto-Nazi site par excellence, the purest of all examples of how Nazism had never been defeated but had instead lingered into the present in ever more cagey forms. What better disguise could Nazism assume than a Jewish state?

Israel thus advanced in the New Left imagination into the vanguard of imperialist aggressors, and the Palestinian resistance into the front rank of modern anti-Nazism. "We are all German Jews" came to mean: our sympathies lie with the Palestinians. In West Germany, the shift of attitude in regard to Israel was probably more pronounced than in other countries. Israel's military triumph aroused a somewhat creepy excitement among German conservatives. The *Bild Zeitung* celebrated the Israeli general Moshe Dayan as a new Rommel, the "Desert Fox." Israel's tanks were greatly admired. An efficient army, at last! A Jewish *Wehrmacht*! And the student left recoiled. That was why, for a period in the late 1960s and early 1970s, a militant and angry opposition to Zionism swelled into a main principle of the student movement in Germany, as well as elsewhere—why a young adventurer such as Joschka Fischer would have traveled in 1969 to exotic Algiers to attend a convention of the P.L.O., and might not have batted an eye when the convention solemnly voted to crush its enemy.

THE WHOLE OUTLOOK of anti-Zionism suddenly seemed to fit the left-wing worldview. On the other hand, a theoretical sympathy for the Palestinian cause brought the European New Left into contact with actual Palestinian guerrillas, which, you might think, would have transformed the budding new sympathies into sentiments of love and brotherhood—an international fraternity of revolutionaries. But fraternity was hard to achieve. The Palestinians, once they had become known, ceased to be exotic. And as the European leftists got a closer look, the New Left's instinctive anti-Zionism—the interpretation that pitted heroic Palestinian resistance fighters against cleverly disguised Nazi Zionists—began to crumble.

That was the story behind the amazing evolution of Fischer's friend Hans-Joachim Klein, the penitent terrorist. Klein had joined the Revolutionary Cells in Germany and had united with Carlos believing that he was going to put his mechanic's skills to good use in a left-wing

military organization, fighting Nazism in its modern disguises. The Revolutionary Cells sent him for military training in an Arab country. In his interview on this theme with Cohn-Bendit in the mid-1980s, Klein did not specify which country. But wherever it was, he was not happy. He found himself in a military training ground where, in one part of the camp, European leftists singing left-wing songs received their anti-Zionist military training, and, in another part, European fascists singing fascist songs received their own anti-Zionist military training.

The Palestinian movement turned out not to be an anti-fascist or anti-Nazi cause at all. It turned out to be an anti-Jewish cause. Klein was horrified. His mother had been imprisoned for a while in Ravensbruck, the Nazi camp, and died later on from her sufferings there, when he was still a little child. In his adulthood, he began to imagine, or perhaps to fantasize, that she was Jewish—a common fantasy among modern Germans. That was why he abandoned the Revolutionary Cells and then went even further and accused his old comrades among the German guerrillas not just of having betrayed the revolutionary ideal but of being out-and-out anti-Semites. That was a shocking accusation.

A good many French New Leftists went through an identical turnabout, except without having killed anyone first. The French student movement never did generate a hard-line Marxist tendency of the sort that in West Germany produced the Red Army Fraction and in Italy the Red Brigades. I suppose that in France the libertarian currents in New Leftism were much too vigorous to allow such any such thing to take shape. The main organized tendency to come out of the 1968 uprisings in France was, instead, a group called the Proletarian Left, which was usually described as Maoist (and its members as "Maos"), and which Cohn-Bendit liked to described as outright Stalinist; but it was, more accurately, a Mao-spontex hodgepodge—an old-fashioned Marxist organization streaked with libertarian impulses. (The Proletarian Left kept having to expel people who, because of those impulses, insisted on smoking their unproletarian hashish and muttering about Stalinists. I spent a couple of weeks living in a commune with those people in Paris, and felt their pain.)

So the Proletarian Left, in its spontex ambivalence, dithered on the road to terror. It was only in 1972, a late date by New Left standards, when the French Maos finally did their revolutionary duty and kidnapped an assistant personnel director at a Renault factory. They did it under the rubric of the New People's Resistance,

whose very name raised the honorable old banner of anti-Nazism. The kidnapping was halfhearted, though, and after a while the New People's Resistance let their victim go, without having received a single sou in ransom.

Half a year went by, and then the PLO's Black September group, with the Revolutionary Cells' helping hand, launched its attack on the Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic Games. And the leaders of the Proletarian Left in France, having flinched at their own violence, flinched at the Palestinian violence, too. The obvious truth that terrorist action means the murder of random persons for political aims suddenly became, to them, obvious. And the French Maos, exactly like Klein, turned away in horror—not just at the killings in Munich and at the general strategy of Palestinian terror, but also at their own intentions of launching similar campaigns at home.

JOSCHKA FISCHER WENT through a version of that same shock. The recognition fell on him in July 1976, seven months after his friend Klein played his part in the assault at Vienna and shortly after the suicide (unless it was a murder) of Ulrike Meinhof. The Revolutionary Cells, acting on behalf of jailed Palestinian terrorists, hijacked an Air France plane, took it to Entebbe in Uganda, and went about arranging a "selection" of passengers, Jews on one side, non-Jews on the other, with the Jews slated for execution. In that instance, an Israeli army unit, under the command of the young Ehud Barak, staged a spectacular raid and managed to rescue all but one of the hostages, though one Israeli soldier was killed. The soldier happened to be Jonathan Netanyahu, whose brother Benjamin was, like Barak, thereby propelled into a political career. A good deal of Israeli politics owes something to the events in Entebbe.

And the same turns out to be true of German politics. The German terrorists were killed by the Israeli commandos, and only after their deaths did Germany's New Left discover who those people were. It was a revelation. The terrorist leader turned out to be a man named Wilfried Boese, who was well-known and much-admired on the Frankfurt left—a hammy thespian who used to play the evil capitalist in street theater events, a founder of various left-wing institutions, and a prominent member of Frankfurt's Black Panther solidarity committee. Fischer knew Boese. Now was his own moment to be astonished.

Suddenly the implications of anti-Zionism struck home to him. What did it mean that, back in Algiers in 1969, the

PLO, with the young Fischer in attendance, had voted the Zionist entity into extinction? Now he knew what it meant. Fischer seems never to have gotten over the shock of Entebbe. Even in the early weeks of 2001, at the height of the scandal provoked by the photographs in *Stern*, the memory of the Air France hijacking came back to haunt him. He spoke to a reporter from that same magazine and cited the hijacking and especially the "selection" of Jews as part of his *Desillusionierung* with the violent left. A few months later, in his capacity as foreign minister of Germany, he happened to be in Israel at the very moment when a terrorist blew up a Tel Aviv disco; he was close enough to hear the blast. It was Fischer, more than any other foreign minister or religious leader or world figure of any sort, who took it upon himself to confront Arafat in person, who (so it has been reported) berated

The terrorist actions at Munich in 1972 and at Entebbe in 1976 were not the only examples, either. Klein announced his turn against terrorism in 1977 by making the sensational gesture of sending to *Der Spiegel* a letter containing his own pistol from the Vienna attack and announcing that the terrorists were planning on murdering the leaders of the Jewish communities of Berlin and Frankfurt. That was no idle threat, either. Carlos in person, gun in hand, rang the doorbell of the scion of Marks & Spencer in London and murdered the man on the spot for no other crime than being a Jew. There was an insane idea of murdering famous Jewish musicians such as Artur Rubinstein and Yehudi Menuhin. The discovery that some people in the terrorist brigades had actually descended into such thinking came as a pretty severe blow to the muddle-headed non-terrorists of the German New Left.



Joschka Fischer at the Velika Krusa mass grave, Kosovo, June 1999

Arafat ferociously and even forced him into declaring some sort of a cease-fire. The erstwhile militant for the PLO, now militant against Palestinian terror.

Entebbe had such an effect on quite a few of West Germany's New Leftists. A new suspicion was dawning on those people—a little tardily, you might complain, but dawning nonetheless. It was a worried suspicion that New Left guerrilla activity, especially in its German version, was not the struggle against Nazism that everyone on the New Left had always intended. It was a suspicion that, out of some horrible dialectic of history, a substantial number of German leftists had ended up imitating instead of opposing the Nazis—had ended up intoxicating themselves with dreams of a better world to come, while doing nothing more than setting out to murder Jews on a random basis: an old story.

THERE WAS A further shock, and it resonated at still deeper levels, if only because many more people were involved. It was the news from Indochina. New Left movements all over the world had yearned for a Communist Indochina, had worked hard for it, had sacrificed, had struggled, and had done a lot of dreaming, too. The new utopian society was supposed to emerge there at last, in a bamboo-and-thatch version. That was a popular idea—an irresistible idea, really. Those cone-hatted rice farmers were actually defeating the B-52s, and if a Third World peasant insurgency could fend off imperial France and then the mighty United States, what couldn't be done around the world, given sufficient dedication and the rightness of a cause? Millions of hearts beat to that rhythm.

But when the Communists did triumph

in Cambodia, and the new society turned out to be what it was, a new and unpredicted truth became clear, and not just in regard to the sorry turn of events in far-away Asia. For it was suddenly obvious to anyone with eyes that huge portions of the New Left had ended up supporting a cause that, in the case of the Palestinian guerrillas and their allies in Germany and other countries, was on a tiny scale resurrecting the old manias of the Nazis of the 1930s and 1940s; and, in the case of the Cambodian Communists, was engaged in slaughter by the millions. Anti-Semitism and genocide, a familiar twosome. And it became obvious that the New Left in its more radical or revolutionary version was not, as everyone had imagined, an anti-Nazi movement. On the contrary.

This was a vast, almost unimaginable shock—a shock that most people in the movement found much too horrifying to take in. For who had the emotional strength to see anything as unexpected, as undesired, as that? To have set out to fight Nazism in its sundry modern democratic disguises, only to have ended up, in a modern left-wing disguise, Nazi-like! That was absurd. To anyone gazing at the world through strictly Marxist glasses, the entire sequence of events and their implications in the early and middle 1970s lay outside the zone of recognizable reality. Marxism pointed to the workings of the capitalist economy and the manipulations of the imperial powers and the crimes of the United States, and if you spoke about anti-Semitism and Communist mass murder, weren't you merely repeating the much-analyzed propaganda of the imperialist West?

Among the Marxists of the New Left—the retro-Marxists and the modern Marxists alike, the mass of non-terrorists together with the handful of terrorists—the response to those shocking discoveries could only be dismissive, or, at any rate, quietly baffled. A good many people on the Marxist side of the movement simply lumbered on as if nothing had happened. Some of those people lumber on still. The largest number of all drifted away, speechless and agog, until the years had passed and they could no longer remember having participated in the New Left and its several manias and fanaticisms—amnesiacs of a New Left radicalism that no one could recall anymore, the kind of people who, in their respectable middle age today, would indignantly deny having ever been anything but ardent liberals. Who, us?

On the New Left, serious responses to the new events tended to come instead from people with some sort of background on the libertarian side of the movement. Those people, the inconsistent anarchists

and the anarcho-Mao-spontaneists, could at least rummage through their bookcases and discover a useful trove of critical pamphlets. They could gaze at the terrible new events and feel with some justification that anti-capitalism was a fine position to hold but had never been the main idea, not for the libertarian left. Those people could feel that authoritarianism, and not capitalism, had always been the real enemy. And having made that recognition, they had to imagine what might be a plausible libertarian response to the unexpected new events.

It was not that everyone with some sort of anarchist or libertarian background rushed to respond to the left-wing calamities with a sudden passion for thoughtful reflection. In the United States, the most influential of the anarchist-influenced writers was Noam Chomsky, who responded to the news from Cambodia exactly as any Third World-oriented Marxist would do: by wondering if the stories about genocide were not imperialist propaganda. Somehow Chomsky tilted in Marxist directions just when his anarchist background might have come in handy. Still, no great psychological obstacle prevented anyone who had done a bit of reading in the old anarchist pamphlets or in back issues of *Socialism or Barbarism* from interpreting the new events in a libertarian light. You needed only to be able to wriggle free of the Marxist influence, and to give the world a fresh glance.

Here and there, a few people did respond in that way. The veterans of the old anarcho-Mao-spontex currents in France were the first to do so, and in the long run they had the biggest influence around the world. But there were people like that in every country. Joschka Fischer was one of them.

It was just that, to shake free of Marxism's influence, to scoop up everything that was valuable about the New Left and abandon the rest, to come up with genuinely new responses—this was, intellectually speaking, extremely difficult. Several years of hard thinking and political experimentation were required. Some of the steps proved to be controversial, too. And the history of this new development, the move away from New Leftism toward something newer, a post-leftism, came up for public inspection and even a lot of jeering in the course of the widening Fischer scandal.

VIII.

FISCHER'S RESPONSE TO the crack-up of the New Left entered into our American debates on one occasion to my knowledge; and a glance at that occasion may shed a little light on how

someone with an extremely radical New Left orientation could have ended up, in the fullness of time, a friend of NATO. The occasion was a discussion between Fischer and Glucksmann, which originally ran in the pages of *Die Zeit* in 1986, and was soon translated into English and published in *Telos*, the philosophical journal of the American New Left.

Among the intellectuals of the American New Left, the *Telos* item attracted a bit of attention partly because, to any of us in the United States who wanted to keep abreast of our comrades and peers in Europe, Glucksmann's name had already become fairly familiar. He had been a '68er in Paris, and afterward a Mao. Woolly essays under his byline ran in the *New Left Review* in England. And he was known for having made a sensational about-face in the mid-1970s to become one of the "New Philosophers," much noted around the world and much mocked. Glucksmann was never the splashiest or most telegenic of the New Philosophers. But that was good. He had a reputation for being the most solidly educated (he was a student of Raymond Aron). So we were curious. We liked to be astonished, too—a New Left trait.

Fischer's name, by contrast, was not at all well-known, except to the specialists in the German left and any Americans who had done a bit of hanging out in the Frankfurt sponti scene. Still, Fischer had become a leader of the West German Greens, and the Green connection counted for a lot in American eyes. The mass New Left in America had given way by the mid-1980s to a panorama of single-issue movements—against nuclear energy and nuclear weapons, for identity politics, for solidarity with the Marxists of Central America. To anyone who participated in those movements, West Germany's Greens seemed rather attractive. They had evidently discovered the secret of how to convert an impractical, marginal, too-radical left-wing movement into a practical, democratic movement that nonetheless knew how to cling to its left-wing soul: a difficult thing to do, achieved by virtually no one else anywhere in the world. That was their reputation. So Fischer, too, as a leader of the Greens, aroused a curiosity in the United States.

There was a charm in his debate with Glucksmann. The New Left had always drawn on a warm internationalist spirit, an easy young people's camaraderie of Paris, Berlin, Frankfurt, Rome, Mexico City, New York, and Berkeley (not to mention Lawrence, Austin, Madison, Ann Arbor, Cambridge, Portland, and so forth around the country and the world). Something of that remembered spirit warmed the discussion in 1986.

Glucksmann had spent a few weeks in Frankfurt back in the early 1970s with Revolutionary Struggle, and he had gotten to know Fischer and regarded him fondly, maybe a little patronizingly.

Fischer had never attended a university, and at the time of Glucksmann's visit he was trying to give himself a proper education by reading the great philosophers in alphabetical order, starting with Aristotle. Glucksmann could only laugh. He and Fischer did seem to have enjoyed themselves, though. That was visible in the 1986 debate. But the debate seemed noteworthy mostly because by the mid-1980s it had become obvious that, among the many responses around the world to the crack-up of the New Left, French New Philosophy, on one hand, and the West German Greens, on the other hand, seemed the most thorough and original, the deepest, the liveliest—the two responses most likely to blossom in the future, and not just in their own countries. They were opposite responses, of course. So there was drama in that debate.

GLUCKSMANN'S New Philosophy is easily enough defined, looking back on it. He went through the entire process of disillusionment of the New Left during the early and middle 1970s, in a fairly radical French version—the shock at Palestinian terror doubled by the shock at Cambodia, the shock at the New Left's plans for its own terror campaign, the remorse, the self-reproach, the moral confusion. And then, having stopped at every station, he set about trying to construct a new set of political ideas. That was his project. He did it in three big steps between 1975 and the early 1980s.

His first step, in the mid-1970s, was to give up on his old-fashioned anti-capitalism and anti-imperialism, the fundamentals of the left, in favor of what he began to call "anti-totalitarianism"—though by anti-totalitarianism he meant something broad, an opposition to extreme oppression of every kind, whatever its shape or cause. Glucksmann was the son of Jewish Resistance fighters during the Nazi period. Even his older sister had participated in the underground, passing out leaflets in Nazi Germany. He grew up thinking of pretty much everything he did as a struggle against Nazism. But now he took his old anti-Nazism and extended it in all sorts of novel directions. He read Solzhenitsyn. He became an enemy—and not just a critic—of the Soviet Union and of communism in Cambodia and everywhere else. He became an enemy of every extreme dictatorship around the world, right-wing or left-wing. He declared himself the enemy of famines, too, wherever

they might occur, as in Africa—the enemy of every extreme horror and catastrophe that leads to mass death and total oppression. And to all of those extreme dictatorships and catastrophes he attached a single name: "Auschwitz."

He still thought of himself as a New Leftist when he adopted his new anti-totalitarian position, and with good reason. He drew whole aspects of his new anti-totalitarianism from the views of his old colleague at Nanterre Michel Foucault, his fellow-rioter who was the philosopher of institutional super-oppression. It may be that, like so many other intellectuals in the French New Left, Glucksmann picked up a few inspirations from the old *Socialism or Barbarism* group in France, too. Those were his influences. They were impeccably left-wing. But he discovered that nothing was inherently or exclusively left-wing about counting himself an enemy of extreme suffering. The left-wing vocabulary was expressive, and he used it in the first of the books that explained his new position, *La Cuisinière et le mangeur d'hommes*, or *The Cook and the Cannibal*.

But the left-wing vocabulary was not necessary; it could even be misleading. After a while he set it aside. Most of Glucksmann's comrades on the left despised his new analysis anyway, no matter what rhetoric he used. (They could not forgive his sympathy for Solzhenitsyn. They thought that he had gone overboard in his opposition to the Soviet Union.) Besides, he discovered that by dropping the left-wing vocabulary, he could free himself from an inhibiting political tradition. So he became an anti-totalitarian with a vocabulary that was neither left-wing nor right-wing—his own vocabulary, hyper-emotional (*that* was his heritage from the New Left), baroque, flowery, philosophical, but no longer ideological in any of the conventional versions.

His second big step was to answer Lenin's "What is to be done?" with a few thoughts that would have curled the lip of any self-respecting Bolshevik. Glucksmann's original notion of revolutionary action, back in New Left days, had been pretty much the same as everyone's—among the more political people. He wanted to take the wartime French Resistance of his parents and his sister and update it with the inspirations that he drew from Mao and the Communist guerrilla fighters of the Third World. He wanted to rally the workers and to spark the revolution; and when the atmosphere hardened and violence was in the air, he wanted to fight the revolutionary war. Now he gave up on that kind of talk. He began to speak, instead, about humanitarian action.

His new heroes were people such as Bernard Kouchner, a man of his own generation. Kouchner had come up in the Communist youth movement of the early 1960s and had gone off to Cuba with Régis Debray to offer his services to Fidel Castro. Castro was nothing but discouraging, though Debray actually did make his way into the Latin American jungle to stand at the side of Che Guevara—the action theorist of guerrilla war. But Kouchner took his rejection by Castro seriously and went off to medical school instead. He ended up organizing Third World emergency medical rescue missions to places such as Biafra during the Nigerian civil war and Beirut during the Lebanese civil war—expeditions just as risky as any guerrilla fighter's, but medical instead of military. Kouchner founded Doctors Without Borders, and then a second organization called Doctors of the World. This was not like founding a guerrilla army—though from the point of view of existential risk and daring, or from the point of view of throwing off bourgeois comforts, perhaps it was a bit like founding a guerrilla army.

Glucksmann, in any case, was thrilled. He saw in Kouchner's medical activism a new ideal: the daring doctor, instead of the Resistance partisan. The savior of lives, instead of the maker of a revolutionary new society. As early as 1979, Glucksmann was promoting missions to rescue the boat people fleeing Vietnamese communism. By the mid-1980s he was already holding up Kouchner's organizations for comparison with the organizations of the left, and remarking that Kouchner was doing a world of good and that the left-wing organizations were doing nothing at all.

Glucksmann's third big step followed more or less logically from his first two: his anti-totalitarianism and his ardor for humanitarian action. He wanted to oppose extreme oppression with something more than medical rescue missions—he wanted to put up a military resistance, too. He came out for the military deterrence of the Soviet Union, which meant coming out for NATO. The Soviets installed new missiles aimed at Western Europe, and President Reagan announced a plan for new American missiles aimed at the Soviet Union. And Glucksmann came out for Reagan's missiles. He even defended the logic of nuclear deterrence. This was a genuine shocker to his old comrades on the left, needless to say. Solzhenitsyn was bad enough, but NATO?

IN THEIR DEBATE in 1986, Fischer could not get over how far Glucksmann had strayed from their common origins. Fischer was irate. But to

understand his indignation (and why his anger would slowly fade, until he himself had ended up following something like each of Glucksmann's three steps)—to understand all of this, it is necessary to glance at his own reaction to the crack-up of the New Left. His first important move, in the wake of the events at Entebbe, was fairly tentative. He gave a speech begging the German terrorists to put down their weapons. That was a useful thing to do, though it was not exactly a turn away from radical leftism.

In 1976, Fischer was against bomb-throwing, but not against stone-throwing. Against guerrilla war, but not against street fighting. Against murderous violence, but not against unmurderous violence. Someone who looks back on those

bomb-throwing, then, there was an enormous gap, and in 1976 everyone could see it plainly—everyone on the left, that is.

Thinking back on Fischer's speech, Glucksmann has pointed out to me that Fischer showed a lot of bravery to say anything at all about the guerrillas. In Italy in those years, the Red Brigades adopted a grisly habit of "kneecapping" people who criticized them in public. There was every reason to worry that, in West Germany, the Red Army Fraction or the Revolutionary Cells or someone else might do the same, overcome by a feeling of betrayal and rage or even something as pale as contempt at what Fischer had said. And the terrorists did feel a contempt. Klein made that clear in an interview that ran in the American jour-

out of politics. There was nothing else to do, anyway. The New Left was disintegrating. He drove a taxi. And when he returned to the political world, he signed up with the Greens, whose movement was strictly post-New Left. He joined in 1981.

IX.

THE WEST GERMAN Greens resembled the French New Philosophers in a couple of respects. The Greens, too, wanted to escape the manias and the delusions of the traditional left, wanted to make a sharp break with the left-wing past. The nineteenth-century proletariat, the war-to-the-death of economic classes, the cult of the factory, of Marx, and of the pioneers of socialism, the barricades: the Greens wanted to be rid of every one of those ancient things.

It was just that, where Glucksmann and the New Philosophers in France wanted to give up the habit of thinking in large philosophical systems and especially wanted to give up the exhilarating old habit of imagining future revolutions and perfect societies, the Greens in West Germany wanted to take the left-wing concepts from the past and, item by item, recycle them into notions suitable for the present. Instead of the old proletarian metaphysic with its catastrophic vision of capitalism and its dream of a future proletarian society, the Greens proposed a new ecological metaphysic with its own catastrophic vision of capitalism and a dream of a new ecological utopia. Instead of the cult of the factory, the cult of the forest. Instead of the class war, the ecological struggle. Instead of the socialist millennium, the ecological millennium. Instead of the color red, the color green.

The German Marxists of a hundred years ago split between the revolutionary "orthodox" and the moderate "revisionists," and in precisely this manner the Greens split between the revolutionary "fundis" (or fundamentalists) who wanted to resist political compromises, and the reformist "realos" (or realists), who were happy to push their program forward one modest inch at a time. Fischer, the new Fischer of the 1980s, was a realo. By the mid-1980s he was already needling his Green comrades for their hostility to NATO. The Greens voted a resolution calling on Germany to withdraw from NATO. Fischer, by then a canny politician, declined to sign it. He remained a man of the left, even so. He had no intention of lining up with the United States in its struggle against the Soviet Union. He wanted to stay independent of both superpowers. The imperialist nature of the United States seemed to him a danger of the first order.



Fischer with German officers deployed with NATO forces in Macedonia, March 1999

distinctions today might laugh. Punching a policeman in the back or kicking him when he is down can be pretty brutal, after all, even if not murderous; and besides, it can end up murderous. Still, those were distinctions with a difference. The whole problem of civic life in West Germany was to find ways to shake people out of the old authoritarian habits of the German past, to get rid of the spirit of obedience, to encourage people to go out and protest, maybe with a bit of noise, too. That was the idea behind the left-wing street battles. The street fighters wanted to go too far, but not too, too far: to make protests that broke the code of obedience, but would not impose by violence a different code of obedience. The guerrillas, by contrast, wanted to establish their own system by force of arms: that was the whole point of founding even the tiniest of armies. Between rock-throwing and

nal *Semiotext(e)* back in 1982. (Klein's mention of Fischer and his opposition to West German terrorism must be one of the earliest mentions of Fischer in the American press.)

So Fischer's speech in 1976 was a first step. There were others. Glucksmann came to Frankfurt, promoting his book about Solzhenitsyn and the Soviet prison camps and the necessity of being anti-totalitarian. The militants of the left came out to jeer. Fischer stood by Glucksmann, though. Fischer and Cohn-Bendit presented Glucksmann at a public forum, quite as if Glucksmann's ideas were suitable for a left-wing discussion, which was something rare in those years of extreme dogmatism. Fischer was trying to get people to accept a principle of open debate—no small thing.

Mostly, though, in the effort to think his own new thoughts, Fischer dropped

He said to Glucksmann, in their discussion in 1986: "I do not want to identify myself with either Communist or American imperialism." He wanted to move beyond power blocs and imperial confrontations, to arrive at a different sort of politics, still imbued with the radical values of the past and the insights of left-wing theory. Glucksmann's arguments could only seem, to Fischer's way of thinking, dismal in the extreme, like nothing more than a fancy French repetition of every bellicose cold war platitude of the American superpower, lacking a vision of the future, lacking ideals, lacking the red blood of a left-wing heart.

"What separates us," Fischer told Glucksmann, "is your return to a rigid anti-communism as an ideological foundation." That was an icy phrase. Most people on the left in the 1980s, I think, would have seen that statement as the clincher in the argument—a devastating hit. Glucksmann had become a dogmatist of the right, a rigid instead of flexible thinker, an ideologue, every terrible thing. An apologist for the American superpower. A sad case!

BUT GLUCKSMANN HAD more to say. From his own point of view, it was Fischer who had surrendered to the will of an imperialist superpower. The West German Greens pictured themselves as putting up a lively resistance to tyrannical impositions from the United States. Yet Glucksmann considered that, on the contrary, the Greens were merely lowering their submissive German heads in the face of totalitarian pressure—as Germans had done in times past. It was just that, in the 1980s, the totalitarian pressure was coming from the Soviet Union.

The Greens prided themselves on being a new type of German: rebels against authority. But Glucksmann saw in them Germans of the old type, the respecters of power and the enthusiasts of obedience. He knew very well that, in their own imaginings, the Greens were strictly independent of the Soviet Union, even contemptuous of it. But he pointed out something to Fischer. The anti-missile demonstrators in West Germany had directed nearly all their indignation at the United States, and almost none at the Soviet Union. Which superpower was occupying half of Europe, though? "We are left with the scandal," Glucksmann said, "that 500,000 people demonstrated against Reagan, but only 10,000 against Brezhnev. This fact has a scandalous effect not only in Paris, but also in Prague and Warsaw, and on all those who struggle for freedom in Eastern Europe."

Fischer replied that Glucksmann

seemed to expect some enormous turnabout in political life, some immense change. And no such thing was going to happen. "You are taking a perspective twenty years from now," Fischer said. "Gorbachev will not change. America will also not fundamentally change. Without a doubt, there is a huge monopoly of opinion in the Soviet Union. This is probably the case in two-thirds of the world, or even more. But Hollywood is essentially more effective as far as the monopoly of opinion is concerned."

From Glucksmann's perspective, Fischer had lost the argument right there. It was preposterous to suppose that Soviet censorship and America's Hollywood were in some way comparable, and crazier still to imagine that Hollywood was "essentially" worse. And Glucksmann responded with a terrible swift word: "No."

BACK IN 1986, it would have been easy to suppose that Fischer had merely blundered at that moment, and in the heat of argument had let loose a foolish volley of hyperbole, as anyone might do. But today we may look on that debate with a bit of accumulated knowledge and recognize that blunders such as Fischer's bubbled up naturally from the fundamentals of his anti-imperialist outlook. The blunders came out of the instinct that led him and everyone else with old-fangled or even new-fangled leftist points of view to look at the world from the standpoint of the crimes of capitalism—from a standpoint that, by definition, attributed the world's woes principally to capitalist economics (and therefore to the United States, the capital of capital), and by afterthought to anything else.

Then again, maybe the foolishness in Fischer's remark was obvious even at the time, and not just to Glucksmann. For what does seem plain, looking back today, is that Fischer's side of the argument—the popular side, many people would have said, judging from the mass demonstrations in West Germany and Britain and the United States and elsewhere—was not as strong as it may have seemed. And Glucksmann's side—the unpopular one, judging from the malicious scorn that so many commentators heaped and still heap on the new intellectual generation in France, the non-geniuses, the less-than-Sartres—was gathering strength year by year.

This was certainly true in France. The shift in opinion from New Leftism or even Old Leftism to something like New Philosophy was already visible in Paris by the mid-1970s. Foucault in his later years, as is sometimes forgotten, was rather a supporter of Glucksmann. Sartre himself, in

1979, the year of his death, stood with Foucault and even with Aron to endorse Glucksmann's argument not just about humanitarian action but, implicitly, about burying the hatchet with the right. The new attitude was symbolized by a famous photograph of Sartre side by side with the conservative Aron, and a Beatle-haired Glucksmann alongside them, representing the younger generation: the three men together, left-wing, right-wing, and youth, at a meeting to call for emergency humanitarian aid for the refugees of Vietnamese communism. By the early 1980s it had already become obvious that, at least in France, a large group of the more interesting younger intellectuals was thinking along lines close to Glucksmann's—the '68ers, grown up now, "the former left," as they came to be called: Alain Finkielkraut, Pascal Bruckner, Bernard-Henri Lévy, and several other writers, the veterans of the student insurrection.

A similar evolution was going on among the dissidents of the Eastern bloc. Even as late as the early 1980s a good number of the dissidents there, the radical intellectuals, '68ers by and large, might still have identified with Fischer more than with Glucksmann. Václav Havel has described how, in the intervals when he was out of jail, he would turn on his television and watch the mass demonstrations of the West German anti-nuclear protesters and would root for the people with long hair and pacifist principles. By the mid-1980s, however, he and the other dissident intellectuals of the Eastern bloc were beginning to lose patience with the Western peace movements, at least on political grounds. (The cultural affinity remained—a complicating point.) Glucksmann was aware of this evolution in the East, too. That was why in his debate with Fischer he invoked the dissidents, while Fischer did not.

BY THE MID-1980S you could even detect a few shifts in opinion in Fischer's own circle of friends and comrades. Cohn-Bendit was the bellwether. In 1986 Cohn-Bendit was still living in a New Left-style commune, putting out *Pflasterstrand*. He, too, was a Green by then: Danny the Green. But he was keen on preserving a sense of continuity with the New Left past, and he went around the world that year with a television crew filming interviews with some of the heroes of the 1968-era uprisings in different countries, which he later turned into a book called *Nous l'avons tant aimée, la révolution*, or *We Loved the Revolution So Much*. His idea was to produce a series of interviews showing the international dimension of the New Left and the seriousness of the people who had been

involved and the evolution in their thinking—to assemble a sort of '68ers' International by means of television and the book. He went to the United States and interviewed Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, Bobby Seale, Jane Alpert, and Susan Brownmiller—the American delegation to his '68ers' International.

He conducted an interview with Hans-Joachim Klein for this same purpose, though Klein was still on the lam. Klein and Fischer, together with the feminist Barbara Koster, were Cohn-Bendit's West German delegation. (The accompanying photo of Fischer showed him as a young politician in blue jeans and sport jacket, a great advance in visual imagery over the black-motorcycle-helmet look.) Glucksmann, by contrast, was definitely not on Cohn-Bendit's list, nor anyone else who had made the transition to something like New Philosophy. Those people, the New Philosophers, had wandered too far from the old left-wing idea to be acceptable. In his introduction to the book, Cohn-Bendit went so far as to complain about "defrocked Stalinists" who had made themselves virgins by turning into Reaganites. He meant the ex-Maos.

Cohn-Bendit's '68ers' International was notable for one other large omission, at least in the television documentary and in the first edition of the book, which appeared in 1986. He had tried to arrange an interview with someone from the 1968 generation in the Soviet bloc, namely Adam Michnik, a leader of the Polish student movement from those days. Only the Communist government in Poland had crushed the Solidarity labor movement and Michnik was languishing in jail, where there was no interviewing him. Then he got out, and Cohn-Bendit was able to speak with him at last, if only for the mass-market paperback edition of the book. Michnik seemed eager to be interviewed. He very much thought of himself in generational terms—a '68er through and through. He kept insisting on this to Cohn-Bendit.

But Michnik's interview turned out to be unlike anyone else's in the book. He and

Rest Stop, Alabama

Even here the rows of urinals
Are "automatic-sensor operated."
There's a laser eye that watches me
Unzip my pants so when I zip them up
It does the flushing for me seven times.

Above my head the ceiling has a speaker
Dishing out the sticky sentiments
Of country music, giving me advice,
Clichés and platitudes, that tell how not
To live my life.

Out in the lobby again
A road map on the wall says, "You Are Here!"
And I can press a button near the map
To catch the weather service bulletin:
"It's partly cloudy in Mobile tonight."

I wonder why it matters if the clouds
Are out at night, but I remember how
Sometimes I've seen the stars go blank in places
And been told that it was flocks of birds
Migrating in the dark too high to see.

There's melatonin in their pineal glands
Behind their beaks to let them find their way
By sensing minute changes in the light,
Unlike my kind whose senses have become
So insignificant that only words
And widgets thought in words can get us home.

It's been reported on the radio
That certain cars are being made today
With GPS devices in the dash
So drivers needn't worry with directions,
Reading road signs, having to stop and ask.

And if you watch the sky at night you'll see
The orbits of the satellites that catch
And send the signals of the world, what song
To sing for whom, which urinal to flush.

Back in my truck I hang my head out, looking
More at constellations than the road
As if to follow my nose and navigate
From star to star, as the crow flies, like geese
And all the hordes of fowl that need no sign
To beat the shortest course from A to Z.

Wilmer Mills

Cohn-Bendit argued about the Vietnam War. Michnik was not about to condemn the United States for having put up a fight against communism. In this one passage of the book, the principles of anti-totalitarianism, non-ideological solidarity, and respect for NATO—Glucksmann's principles, in a word—suddenly emerged as fairly reasonable, and deserving of their proper place in a survey of the heroes of '68: principles that could not be rejected

out of hand just because the conservatives or the State Department might approve of them. Cohn-Bendit gave the impression of being a little astonished by Michnik's remarks, but he published the interview anyway and even advertised it on the jacket of the new edition. All of this was quite significant, seen in retrospect. Cohn-Bendit was the only person anywhere in the world who could claim to speak for the 1968 generation as an international phenomenon, and this small alteration in his book, the addition of Adam Michnik, spoke volumes.

X.

THOSE WERE THE shifts in argument and mood through the 1970s and 1980s. But the moment when large numbers of veterans of the New Left finally had to put aside matters of mere philosophy or attitude and adopt actual positions and accept the political consequences, and sometimes the more-than-political consequences—that moment, the moment of truth, arrived only after the Soviet collapse had gotten under way. A first sign of it could be seen in the months after Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait and declared it annexed. George Bush the Elder was president of the United States, and he defined the war to drive Saddam out of Kuwait mostly as a war over material interests, which came down to oil; and Bush's definition, given the power of the American president, guaranteed a pretty strong backlash against the war on the part of a lot of people on the left, all over the world. Still, the inadequacy in Bush's way of thinking did not inhibit a number of other

people from noticing a few additional aspects of the war: the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Kurds in northern Iraq, the threats of further atrocities to come, Saddam's threat to incinerate the Israelis. There were, in short, questions of genocide to consider: a twentieth-century predicament.

Among the old militants with New Left backgrounds, some people did notice that sort of thing. This was certainly the case in

France, due to the circle of the “former left.” You could see something similar in Germany, too, where a handful of old-time heroes of the New Left—Wolff Biermann, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, and a few others—surprised their public by declaring themselves in favor of the war. Peter Schneider, who had come out of the anarchist half of the New Left, gave his endorsement. Cohn-Bendit did the same—an especially brave thing to do, given that Cohn-Bendit was, in his fashion, a political leader and not just an intellectual, and had to worry about his popularity. In the Soviet bloc, the ’68ers had no trouble at all supporting the war. Havel was already the president of what was still Czechoslovakia, and he went so far as to send a small detachment of Czechoslovak soldiers, experts in gas warfare, into the Saudi desert to take their place in the grand alliance. Even in the United States you could have seen a few small indications of a split on the left on this issue.

YET THE BIG MOMENT of change came the next year, when the ethnic massacres got under way in the Balkans. Then at last the old, profound question of Nazism and what to do about it—the old founding question of the New Left—rumbled up in a European setting and not just in connection to a barbarous dictator in the Middle East. And once again the veterans of the New Left had to ask themselves the old questions about Europe and its past. They had to ask: why was it, how could it have been, that Germany, the center of civilization, had once upon a time gone Nazi? And how, why, did the rest of Europe, most of it, end up being conquered by the Nazis back in the 1930s and 1940s? Everyone knew the answer to those questions in a general way. Germany had gone Nazi and Europe had succumbed because the Nazis were strong and well-organized and powerfully motivated; but mostly because everyone else, the non-Nazis, had failed to resist.

And why the lack of resistance, in those days? A thousand reasons, of course. And here were mass graves once again. And again a thousand reasons not to resist, and even a new reason—a thousandth and first. The new reason was something never before imagined, a new mutation of an old argument, a novelty, almost a contribution to modern political thought. The Atlantic Alliance, having come out of World War II, did have to look on genocide as a fundamental enemy, at least in regard to Europe. When the massacres got going in the former Yugoslavia, the big Western democracies had to respond, if only to affirm what it meant in the 1990s to be a powerful democracy. So the big powers

responded. They unfurled the bloodless blue flag of the United Nations. They came up with a principle of non-action through action: a resistance that was no resistance at all. A non-action that cannot be faulted because it calls itself action: that was the new mutation. And so, when the Serb nationalists made their insane “selection” of Bosnian Muslims to be killed en masse at Srebrenica, the Dutch troops and a French general and the other Western military forces in Bosnia—the foreign interveners—did what they had been sent to do, which was to not intervene.

HOW COULD THE Western democracies have managed to come up with such an absurdity? It was because, by the 1990s, the vast public in the democratic world was definitively opposed to genocide in a general way; but somebody had to step forward to oppose genocide in a concrete and specific way. And who was that going to be? In Europe, who was going to argue for a genuine forcefulness and not just a morally pleasing display of high dudgeon? The champions of foreign policy “realism,” by any chance? That was out of the question. Realism is never genocide’s enemy. Genocide in modern times always takes place in the margins of what appear to be great events, never at the center; but “realism” is a calculation of power at the center—a calculation of “Great History,” in Finkelkraut’s phrase, not of Little History. Genocide attacks the weak, but realism appraises the strong.

If genocide in World War II has come to seem central to the war against Nazism, that is only because, in later years, the kinsmen and the friends of the slaughtered insisted on viewing it that way, and the historians reconsidered the entire evolution of events and succeeded in changing public attitudes. The realists of the 1930s and 1940s had never looked on the war in that light at the time, and their heirs in the 1990s were not going to respond to genocide in their own time any differently. The realists were going to observe with perfect accuracy that massacres in the Balkans or anywhere else threatened the fundamental interests of not one of the great powers. Massacres were not going to knock over the giant chessboard of world power. What did worry the realist thinkers was that a NATO military intervention in the Balkans might upset Western relations with Russia. Intervention, not massacre, posed the danger, from the point of view of great power relations. Realism was non-interventionism in the 1990s.

The argument for intervention, therefore, was going to have to come from zones of opinion that chose to put matters of conscience at the heart of their foreign

policy thinking—from the foreign policy “idealists.” Meaning “who?” or “whom?” The Catholic Church? The Church turned out to have its interests in the Balkans, and they were those of the Croatian Catholics. (Between the Yugoslav civil war and the massacres in Central Africa, the 1990s proved to be another less than splendid decade for Catholicism in the matter of genocide.) And the Protestant political instinct leaned toward pacifism.

Would the call come from the political left—from the parties and the movements that pictured themselves as the voice of the oppressed? But there were multiple lefts. There was an old-fashioned and even reactionary left (to call it that), which still felt an ancient tug of loyalty to the Soviet Union and therefore to Soviet communism’s child and heir, the Russian republic. Sympathy for Russia counted for quite a lot in the Western European left, and leftism, from that perspective, meant a tender concern for Russia’s national interests. This kind of thinking counted for something even in the United States, where *The Nation* published an amazing series of anguished editorials about the need not to upset the Russians and especially the nationalists among them.

Then again, there was also a *realpolitik* left, which was not in the slightest inclined to idealism in foreign policy. François Mitterrand, the president of France, *realpolitik*’s master of masters, made an art of signaling his solidarity while craftily defending a weirdly nineteenth-century vision of French national interests in the Balkans and in Central Africa alike. (It did mean something that Mitterrand, the Socialist, turned out to have been an old Vichy official in an earlier life.) The *realpolitik* left in Europe, just like the *realpolitik* liberals in the first years of the Clinton administration, were hardly going to press for forceful interventions in the name of something as vaporous as human rights.

IN EUROPE, IF any large group of people was going to press for a forceful intervention, it was going to have to include a good many veterans of the student uprisings circa 1968—the people who, in their young days, had imagined that they were building a new civilization in Europe. Those people, in looking at the Balkans, were at least guaranteed to give a few thoughts to matters of genocide, to questions of resistance and non-resistance—the issues that, many years before, had brought them to the left-wing barricades. Anti-genocide was those people’s oldest and deepest idea, together with the worried conviction that Nazism was capable of reappearing under new disguises.

But even if the old '68ers and their heirs did give some thought to massacres in the Balkans, how were they possibly going to make a case for an intervention that would actually intervene? The '68ers and their heirs were, after all, of two minds on military questions, divided into the warring attitudes that you could have seen in the *Die Zeit* and *Telos* debate back in 1986. In France the question of intervention was decided fairly quickly and easily among the intellectuals, as could have been expected. The "former left" had long ago ascended into powerful positions in the French press and on radio, and throughout the later Mitterrand years those people pushed for the three principles that had first been laid out by the New Philosophers years before: anti-totalitarianism, humanitarian action, forceful means.

The "former left" had a success, too, in a painfully delayed version. The traditions of the French Communists and of Mitterrand's Socialists; the traditions of "realism" at the Quai d'Orsay and its ancient bugbears about the balance of power and the Serbo-French alliance of ages past and the Francophone struggle against its historic foe the Anglophones; the many phantoms that haunted France's political imagination—all of this conspired against any sort of powerful French intervention. Yet once Mitterrand was gone and Jacques Chirac, the conservative, was president, the French government, for all its stammerings and duplicities, did manage to become the first of the Western powers to play any kind of forceful role in the Balkans. Quite a few French soldiers were killed, too (a fact that is always forgotten by Americans who love to sneer at the French). In this way the French opened the door to a more forceful involvement by the timorous Clinton administration. This was in some degree an achievement of the old '68ers in France.

BUT WHAT COULD be expected of the old '68ers and their heritage in Germany? The Greens, to begin with, whose movement represented probably the purest expression of the post-'68 political imagination anywhere in the world—how could they possibly respond? The Greens still insisted on interpreting anti-Nazism to mean anti-imperialism in the left-wing style. Didn't American hegemony pose a terrible danger to Europe and to the world, perhaps the greatest danger of all? A laughable question, you might observe, given the Balkan massacres. But the Greens had been asking that question all their lives, and repetition made it anything but laughable. The United States had committed crimes in the past. How could it not be doing the same in the present?

In their pacifist hearts, the Greens had to ask: what about the moral dangers of using any force at all? They had to wonder about the legacies of Hitler. In the 1940s Hitler had sent German armies into the Balkans and had fought the Serbs. Now the advocates of war wanted to send German armies into the Balkans and fight the Serbs. Why would fighting the Serbs be, this time, anti-Hitlerian? Thus did ten thousand Lilliputian arguments swarm across the terrain, explaining why NATO was a monstrosity and nothing could be done about the Balkans, and that it was too bad but life is tragic, and what about the dangers of nuclear energy?

The Greens needed to tear off their veil of ideology. And this was precisely what Joschka Fischer managed to do. Even as late as 1994 he could not imagine sending German soldiers to places where Hitler had sent German soldiers. But then, with the news from Srebrenica, he finally understood that anti-Nazism in its traditional Green version was going to end as no anti-Nazism at all: "I learned not only 'No more war' but also 'No more Auschwitz.'" For there, at Srebrenica (and at Omarska and other places), was Auschwitz, not just in the figurative sense that Glucksmann liked to bandy about but with greater and grisly exactitude, down to the "selection" by the master ethnic

group of its victims. So Fischer made his choice, and Glucksmann's three principles—anti-totalitarianism, humanitarian action, NATO—finally became his principles, too.

BUT HOW WAS Fischer going to bring along his fellow Greens? The governments of the United States, Britain, and France were not going to clarify the issue on behalf of Europe's pacifists. The Western powers seemed to have sunk comfortably enough into their swamp of make-believe action and their meaningless threats—their clever compromise between "idealist" anti-totalitarianism and "realist" non-intervention. The Serb nationalists alone could force the issue. And on that one point, the government of Slobodan Milosevic proved to be splendidly reliable.

In late 1998 and early 1999, Milosevic's military and paramilitary forces began to clear the Albanians from the whole of Kosovo. The new government in Germany was just then settling into power—the Red-Green coalition with its regiments of ex-New Leftists, now converted into Social Democratic and Green politicians. The emblem of those new people was, of course, Fischer himself, the new foreign minister, far more than Schröder—Fischer the notorious Frankfurt street-fighter, the

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rioter outraged by Ulrike Meinhof's death, the Green anti-militarist in his anti-bourgeois blue jeans. And so on top of the ten thousand Lilliputian arguments against taking any kind of forceful action in the Balkans came ten thousand more, directed against anyone who had participated in the New Left of long ago—low, personal arguments, the arguments that invariably descend on anyone who has displayed the mental alertness to change his mind now and then.

Fischer and his advisers and co-thinkers among the Greens must have gritted their teeth when they contemplated those arguments. They had to have told themselves: if we do what seems to be necessary in order to prevent a giant catastrophe; if we endorse a NATO air campaign against the Serb nationalists; if we, the Greens and the '68ers and the old-time New Leftists, come out for real intervention instead of fake intervention; if we approve a German participation in the NATO action—won't we be accused of inconsistency? Fischer surely had to know: if I come out forcibly against Nazism in its current guise, which happens to be Serb racism, won't I be accused of lack of character? If I stick to what have always been my principles, which have been to oppose Nazism in all its forms, won't I be accused of betraying my principles?

And so it was. The foreign minister gave the endorsement. Germany, which had failed to resist Nazism, resisted Nazism. Feebly, you may say. Even so, German soldiers departed German soil for the purpose of saving someone else's life. Something new under the sun! And Germany's foreign minister, of course, was accused of having been a brute and a man without principles, and the accusations spread around the world, until even *The New York Times* was fretting over the man's moral character. Fischer's friend and old-time roommate was accused of pedophilia, and those accusations, too, made their way around the yellow press of France and England and Italy. The world of Joschka Fischer was presented as a running scandal, and his enemies in the Bundestag congratulated themselves on their maturity and statesmanship in standing up to say of Germany's foreign minister, "This man can no longer represent us to the world." Fischer: a maneuverer without scruples. A thug, a cynic, a man with a dark past.

XI.

THE KOSOVO WAR has sometimes been called "The Liberals' War," because it was the liberal idealists, more than the conservative realists, who were keen on fighting it. But I am not the

first to point out that it could just as easily be described as "The '68ers' War." That was true of the European participants, anyway. The French participation was owed to the circle of "former leftists." The NATO official in charge of the pacification of Kosovo after the Serb military withdrawal was Glucksmann's hero from long ago, Dr. Kouchner. The man who in 1998 signed the treaty that brought the Czech Republic into NATO and therefore into the NATO intervention was Jan Kavan, a Czech '68er. The NATO diplomat in Kosovo for a while was Jiri Dienstbier, another Czech '68er. The secretary-general of NATO during the war was Javier Solana, a '68er from Spain's Socialist Workers Party. And the German participation could not have occurred without Fischer and his allies. The '68ers' International that Cohn-Bendit had tried to assemble in an imaginary version back in the 1980s had finally assembled in real life, under the auspices of NATO. An irony, you might think. But it was not an irony.

At the height of the Fischer affair, Serge July, the editor of the Paris *Libération*, wrote an editorial called "On Your Knees!" accusing Fischer's and Cohn-Bendit's enemies of engaging in a reactionary campaign not just against two individuals but also against the social changes and the social conscience that had come out of the uprisings of the years around 1968—a prosecution by smear of entire portions of the population. That was why *Libération* settled on the inspired phrase "the trial of the Generation of 1968." But if the affair was, in some sense, a generational trial, you would have to conclude that, from a point of view such as July's, everything turned out well enough after a few weeks, certainly in France. The charges against Cohn-Bendit were made, and were rebutted, and evaporated. The animus against Fischer in France never congealed into anything worrisome or even politically awkward.

And in Germany? I followed an English-language Web edition of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* during the controversy, and I noticed that in Frankfurt, too, the affair was looked at precisely as July defined it in Paris—as an accusation against a generation. Naturally the scandal counted for more in Germany than in France, given Fischer's place in the government and the role of the Bundestag, and given those terrible photographs. Yet the polls never did tip against him. At one point Fischer was declared to have the support of seventy-two percent of the polling respondents, a nice statistic for a man under daily assault in the press and in the Bundestag.

Even Fischer's keenest enemies eventually had to bow before that kind of public

reaction. Late in April, the prosecutor in the Klein trial, having left the foreign minister to twist slowly, slowly in the wind, at last dropped the perjury charge, which brought the Fischer affair to an end in a legal sense. But by then the affair had already dribbled to a close in the popular imagination. The true finale, in the judgment of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, came in late March, some ten weeks after the affair had begun, when the results of one other poll came in, quite a fascinating poll precisely because its subject went beyond Fischer himself. The subject in this instance was the generation of 1968. The radicals of that period—were they mainly "interested in power," or were they "idealists"? Such was the question to the German public. The respondents stroked their chins. And a majority (whose exact size was left unreported) answered: "Idealists."

IT IS TRUE that "interested in power" versus "idealism," taken as an either/or proposition, makes for a pretty crude way of judging the motivating sentiment of vast crowds of people. You could shrug off such a poll easily enough. What does it mean, anyway, this word "idealism," outside of some specific setting such as foreign policy, where the word has a kind of technical meaning, connoting a particular set of values? Surely everyone understands by now that idealism has always been Satan's slogan, the father of fanaticism, the mother of self-righteousness, a license for crime. And is it always so bad to be interested in power? No one could believe that Fischer himself had ever been indifferent to power. There had to be more to his politician's career than a love of meetings. The man was obviously a major conniver. And yet that naïve little poll in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* surely offered an expressive commentary on modern life and its foreground from a few decades ago, perhaps not just in Germany.

We can be pretty confident that, thanks to the Fischer affair, no one among the respondents to that poll needed to be reminded of the realities of New Leftism and its history from a quarter of a century before. The movement's ugliest traits had been on public display for months. Nor did anyone need to be reminded of the politician's machinations that had brought Fischer to his present station, nor of the policies that he had adopted once in power. Shady associates and violent acts years ago, NATO bombings in 1999: everyone knew everything. Those were the givens in that poll. And given the givens, the real meaning lurking beneath that naïve-looking question was, I think, a little less naïve than might have seemed to be the case.

The real meaning, I propose, was this: knowing what everyone knows about the New Left of long ago, knowing the consequences of the New Left's many rebellions, knowing the characteristics and consequences of those alternative kindergartens and everything else, knowing the career that Fischer had followed, knowing the role that Fischer had played in 1998 and 1999 in the European crisis over the Balkans—knowing all that, did it make sense (Question One) to speak of a basically admirable quality in the New Left, a quality that could be branded with the approving honorific “idealism”? Did modern society seem (Question Two) better off in the wake of those many New Left rebellions? Did Nazism and its constituent traits and habits seem (Question

Three) to have suffered a blow? Did a personal background in the New Left seem (Question Four) to indicate an attractive feature in someone's character today, lo these many years later?

Those were the real issues, the four questions, hiding beneath the dopey-looking query about idealism and power. The answers, among a majority of the respondents, were plainly yes, yes, yes, and yes. In spite of everything, four yeses, and in a conservative newspaper, too: a sign of political wisdom in the heart of Europe, I think—though I grant that some people, the not-majority among those respondents, perhaps quite a hefty not-majority, answered those questions differently. And so *la lotta continua*, as we used to say. ■

precisely what he should do: he should point out that what was alleged to have taken place never did take place because it never could have taken place. One will not find that kind of response in Wacker's history of American Pentecostals, and their influence on American culture, between 1900 and 1925. Instead of trying to “debunk” such claims, Wacker, a historian of religion, wants “to understand why the practice became so firmly rooted in pentecostal culture despite the absence of corroborating evidence.”

Glossolalia itself, Wacker concedes, is not a language, for it lacks tenses, grammar, and syntax. But neither is glossolalia nonsense. We are best off understanding the phenomenon of speaking in tongues partly as an involuntary physiological process that takes control of believers, but also partly as a process that believers consciously know how to enter and to leave. And speaking in foreign tongues—well, that, he suggests, may have happened because “ideology dictated behavior.” If you were convinced that the Lord was about to make his appearance in the world, you could speed up the process of saving souls in foreign lands by convincing yourself that you spoke the languages that they used.

WACKER'S REFUSAL TO pass judgment on whether early Pentecostals were just fibbing—he considers the possibility, only to reject it as “improbable”—clearly has something to do with the fact that he is himself the product of a Pentecostal family and a self-described sympathizer with the tradition, with one foot inside the tent and one foot outside. His history of the movement, for this reason, is not just a description of how Pentecostals thought and acted, though it is very much that. It is also an attempt to render a very unfamiliar religion intelligible. Given the book's apologetic tone, one might conclude that Wacker is unable to write a credible historical narrative. This would be incorrect. *Heaven Below* is an informative and fascinating account of a religion that has not so much been misunderstood—Pentecostals did much of the holy rolling associated with them—as underestimated. If you want to understand how John Ashcroft, a product of this sometimes otherworldly tradition, became attorney general in this world, then this is the book that you should read.

Wacker goes to great lengths to humanize the Pentecostals about whom he writes, but they do not come across as nice folk. One of the founding “saints,” Charles Fox Parham, reacted to the emotionalism of black Pentecostals by becoming an out-and-out racist. Aimee Semple

Holy Realists

By ALAN WOLFE

Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture by Grant Wacker

(Harvard University Press, 364 pp., \$35)

IN 1914, A pastor in a Kansas mining town, reporting on his conversion efforts, wrote that forty-six individuals had been saved and thirty-three individuals had received baptism. “One brother,” he then added, “... was understood in four languages.” Can an individual who has never studied, or never even heard, a foreign language speak in that language during a moment of religious ecstasy? Can other people who are unfamiliar with a particular language identify it when people are speaking to them? There is a short, clear, and true answer to these questions: no. In the light of everything that we understand about the human capacity for language, it is incontrovertible that it takes years of hard work for an adult to learn a new one, and nobody, literally nobody, is capable of achieving a trance-like state that would enable him or her to master a foreign tongue.

Pentecostals believed otherwise. Emerging toward the end of the nineteenth century out of revivalist religions in the American heartland, Pentecostals—so named because Jesus's followers spoke in tongues and experienced Holy Ghost baptism on the day of Pentecost, according to the scriptural account in the Acts

of the Apostles—are usually derided as “holy rollers” by their critics. Pentecostals combined a faith in the Lord's imminent return with an emphasis on personal salvation and a need for lifelong moral cleansing. Carried away by religious fervor, they included glossolalia—that is the technical term for speaking in tongues—among their religions practices.

It takes a history of Pentecostalism as detailed as Grant Wacker's book to realize that glossolalia was among the more conventional of Pentecostal practices. There was ritual healing, in which, blessed with the spirit of the Lord, the lame would proclaim themselves healed, and some people, going even further, found a way to report on their death and their rebirth. There was grapholalia, the writing of illegible letters under the influence of the Holy Spirit, as well as the phenomenon of right-handed individuals suddenly writing with the left hand. And then there was xenolalia or xenoglossy, the capacity to speak in a foreign language that one has never learned.

What is a historian to do when he comes across letters and documents testifying to a practice that is humanly impossible to carry out? A school of thought that could be described as hard-nosed realism knows

McPherson, the most famous of all the Pentecostals, responded to a request from Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover to stick to the frequencies assigned to her radio station by informing him to "please order your minions of Satan to leave my station alone. You cannot expect the almighty to abide by your wavelength nonsense. When I offer my prayers to Him, I must fit into His wave reception." Wacker quotes the revivalist B. H. Irwin saying of his approach to other evangelicals that "I am in for war—war to the hilt" and "I just love it."

Persuaded that they were chosen by God, Pentecostals felt little compulsion to live by society's norms and customs. Arrested for disturbing the peace during nighttime prayer meetings, they were likely to turn up in court singing Jesus's praise, if not speaking in tongues to the judge. Suspicious of those outside the faith, they were convinced that every believer who was not with them all the way faced eternal damnation: as Martin Marty has remarked, they saw enemies everywhere they looked and they looked everywhere. (So sectarian were Pentecostals that they did not confederate their various approaches until 1948.) They had a special scorn for Catholics, who were supporters of, among other things, "superstition, socialism, criminality, bastardy, congressional corruption, and World War I." They could easily succumb to holier-than-thou-ism, opening themselves up to charges of hypocrisy when it was discovered that they were not always so holy after all. And they could be triumphalist in their missionary zeal, so persuaded were they of the truth and the righteousness of their cause.

Yet if we dismiss Pentecostals as sectarian fanatics, Wacker argues, then we will fail to appreciate their true impact on American culture. There was, for a start, the importance of personal testimony in their expressions of faith, a proclivity that made the individual, not some distant figure of theological authority, the judge of what was truly sacred. Then there was their conviction that, no matter how sinful the state of man, redemption was always possible if only one were willing to open oneself up to Jesus. Although Pentecostals would never formally challenge the inequalities of American society, everyone, regardless of background, was regarded as equal during moments of religious intensity. Their preaching was marked by commonsense rhetoric that refreshingly lacked pretension. In their own way, they were even ecumenical: as Wacker memorably puts it, "everyone was welcome as long as they were willing to be devoured."

Based on everything that I read about

them in Wacker's book, I cannot say that I wound up liking the saints of early Pentecostalism. But I do feel that they have been brought to life. These are people who, for all their fanaticism, knew what they disliked about the world around them and took steps to live in ways that gave them a sense of order and purpose. And their organizational skills alone—which Wacker is at great pains to demonstrate—suggests that they were not so given to rolling on floors that they could not sustain what Wacker rightly calls "one of the great religious migrations of modern times."

TYPICAL OF WACKER'S efforts to make sense of Pentecostalism is the way he treats its approach to Prohibition. Like other evangelical movements, Pentecostals were opposed to what Wacker calls the "standard" sins of smoking and drinking. But that was just the start. "At one time or another," Wacker adds, Pentecostal enthusiasts added to the list "... (in alphabetical order) bands, baseball, boating, bowling, circuses, fireworks, football, loitering, parades, skating, valentines, and zoos. They also denounced amusement parks, beach parties, big dinners, chatting on the telephone, Christmas trees, crossword puzzles, home movies, ice cream socials, kissing bees, scenic railroad trips, and visiting relatives and going on automobile trips on Sundays." The more pleasures modern life made available, the more Pentecostals insisted on the need for resistance to them.

Why would a religious movement go out of its way to insist on so thorough a denial of modern pleasure? Wacker answers with an irony: because the Pentecostals were themselves quite modern. The Pentecostal rejection of worldly pleasure was not, in his view, an expression of anxiety about the emergence of a new world of capitalist rationality in which Pentecostals found themselves out of place. Quite the contrary. By forswearing such pleasures, Pentecostals could prosper from the industrialization that was taking place around them. Refrain from alcohol, and you could become a more efficient worker. Skip the beach party, and you could better organize your time. We sometimes think that when Max Weber pointed out the affinities between Protestantism and capitalism, he was talking about the more established denominations such as Presbyterians and respectable Methodists; but Wacker shows that Weber's thesis holds also for the more hardscrabble evangelical denominations.

To understand the culture of Pentecostalism, then, it is necessary to understand the twin forces of what Wacker calls primitivism and pragmatism. At one level,

Pentecostals insisted on the most basic, almost pre-human aspects of existence; glossolalia, in this sense, represents a return to infancy, when the individual is most at one with the animalistic requirements of sheer survival. One did not experience the divine spirit in the course of daily life. There really was another world beyond this one, and to reach it one had to leave behind all semblance of rational thought and allow oneself to be transported on a journey to the unknown.

At the same time, Pentecostals also managed to keep their feet on the ground. Like those speakers in tongues who knew exactly when to shift into glossolalia and when to shift back again, Pentecostals were adept pragmatists who never lost touch with the larger social world in which they lived. In ways they may never have intended, but from which they were quick to benefit, the Pentecostal insistence on individual salvation provided them with a sense of personal autonomy. Upwardly mobile, if always in danger of falling back into dangerous habits of gambling and drinking, their faith provided for them a way to keep their eyes focused on the long term. Success for them was not the "bitch goddess" damned by William James. It was the inevitable by-product of getting yourself right with God. Though they were religious conservatives, Pentecostals were also social innovators, characterized (in Wacker's words) by "a willingness to abandon old options that did not work in favor of new ones that did. If such traits once suggested Dodge City, in time they would suggest Silicon Valley."

Since Pentecostals do strange things, there is a tendency to write them off as too weird for words. Had Wacker been intent on condemning his subjects for their outlandish views and behavior, he most likely would have missed those aspects of their faith that have enabled Pentecostals to become part of the American mainstream, including not only John Ashcroft but also Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Vern Clark, as well as untold numbers of successful businessmen, lawyers, and at least one very promising historian of religion. For that reason alone, Wacker's decision to suspend judgment on speaking in foreign tongues can be forgiven. The rewards of empathy, in this case, are great.

BUT THEY COME with costs. Persuaded of their monopoly on all that is good and holy, these would appear to be not the kind of people who make good citizens, or who can be trusted with the leadership of their country. This is a by-product of their zeal that Wacker very much underestimates. For all their suspicion of established authority, he writes, "Pentecostals admired the

rich and the powerful. Indeed, a fair number were the rich and the powerful." If this is so, then the success of their movement ought to be feared rather than praised. Indeed, Wacker gives his readers cause for such fears when he writes that "America has changed dramatically" since the years in which his story takes place, but that Pentecostals have changed "only superficially."

Fortunately, Wacker is wrong. Pentecostalism has changed radically since the 1920s—more radically, in fact, than the rest of America. Although one can see signs of the self-righteous extremism of the founding saints in a contemporary coreligionist such as Ashcroft, there is no direct line from the people whom Wacker describes to many of those who would call themselves "Spirit-filled" or charismatic Christians today. There will be exceptions to any generalization, but contemporary Pentecostals, far from exhibiting rigid self-certainty and exulting in their alienation from the mainstream, seem—at least to an outsider—to be very much at the center of a culture of codependency riven with insecurity and doubt.

One Pentecostal leader discussed by Wacker, E.N. Bell, was asked in 1922 what he thought of women braiding their hair. He was against it. "When all is said and done," Wacker writes, "one of the main reasons for avoiding elaborate braiding was the sheer amount of time it took. The point was clear. They had more productive things to do." To appreciate how far Pentecostalism has come since its origins, compare Bell's approach to hair with that favored by Women's Aglow Fellowship International, one of the organizations cited by Wacker as proof of the widespread popularity of Pentecostalism today. As R. Marie Griffith makes clear in *God's Daughters*, this movement attracts people intent on finding Jesus through self-improvement and therapeutic recovery. On their first visit to the hotel in which the group meets—churches are frowned upon, so as not to alienate people who might fear or dislike them—women are offered a full-scale visit to the beauty parlor before their meeting with a personal counselor. Group meetings themselves, while engaged in much praise of Jesus, are also devoted to discussions of abusive husbands or the latest techniques in dieting.

WACKER IS FULLY aware that groups such as this one represent the current phase of the religious movement whose origins he traces. "Latter day enthusiasts," he remarks, "rushed to embrace the therapeutic rewards and technological amenities of late twentieth-century culture with scarcely a thought." Yet he leaves untold

two great stories that he should have addressed. One is how a movement that began by rejecting amusement parks came to accept manicures. Another is how a religion steeped in the idea that Christ would return to earth before the millennium to find most of us filled with sin would so easily morph into a sensibility for which sin can be washed away through the tears of personal confession.

There is a hint in Wacker's book about how these transformations might have taken place. Since the Holy Spirit did everything for them, Pentecostal enthusiasts "were free to do anything." It is as if their faith, however much it may have contributed to a sense of personal autonomy, never carried with it a sense of personal responsibility. And it is perhaps just this lack of responsibility that explains how the stern Old Testament judgmentalism of the saints could so easily be transformed into the soft non-judgmentalism characteristic of evangelical movements such as Women's Aglow. If God is the one who makes all the judgments, then humans are under no obligation to make any of their own.

Wacker calls his book *Heaven Below* because the early Pentecostals received "the two greatest goods that mortal existence had to offer: the life beyond in all its fullness, and the life at hand in all its richness." But heaven below is another name for hell above. Today's Pentecostals live in a world in which this life is filled with anxiety and the next life may be out of reach. Under such conditions, they seek the approval of everyone else in their Bible study group for the same reason that early enthusiasts could be so burdensome to everyone else around them: they lack sufficient appreciation for such primary modern values as inner-directed purposiveness and respect for others. At one point Wacker notes that contemporary Pentecostals "proved flexible about the necessity of speaking in tongues." Yet they find some of the same catharsis that their ancestors discovered in glossolalia through the intense emotional release that comes from sharing stories of personal despondency that happily resulted in the discovery of Jesus. When the world is too much with you, leaving the world behind has its advantages, whether it involves speaking in tongues or collapsing into tears.

Wacker ends by invoking the concept of irony, even adducing irony's great defender, Lionel Trilling. Yet he seems reluctant to explore how truly ironic it is that a religion so determined to be at odds with the world came so easily to terms with it. Faced with pragmatism, primitivism never had a chance. If America can tame Pentecostalism, it can proba-

bly domesticate anything; but this is a conclusion that Wacker seems unwilling to confront, because it would leave the grandchildren of his saints so much like the rest of America that his story would serve antiquarian purposes only.

Grant Wacker is one of a number of historians, including Nathan Hatch, George Marsden, Mark Noll, and Joel Carpenter, who, having grown up in one evangelical church or another, cannot accept the caricatures of conservative Protestantism bequeathed to us by H. L. Mencken or Richard Hofstadter. The book that he has written is certainly one of the finest books in this tradition. A religious movement that has attracted some ten million members, that has roughly two hundred distinct denominations in contemporary America, and whose charismatic style some nineteen percent of Americans consider their own deserves the respectful treatment of its origins that it receives here.

But respect should not altogether rule out the standpoint of a critical historian. Despite Wacker's painstaking work in obscure archives and his determination to treat his subjects as real human beings with ideas and practices worth taking seriously, his empathy finally stands in the way of a completely persuasive account. "Pentecostals continue to be my people," he observes. "To be sure, I cringe when I watch pentecostal flamethrowers on television. But I grow defensive when outsiders take swipes at them, not because they do not deserve it, but because most outsiders have not earned the right." I could not have better expressed my reservations about this book. Wacker is indeed defensive. He is more intent on proving a case than exploring a reality.

But historians always have the right. Wacker's sense that one has to earn the right to criticize a group to which one does not belong cannot be taken seriously. It could hardly be said to characterize his subjects, who made very clear their sense of estrangement from America, and were prepared to criticize it without end. It also undermines the thesis of Wacker's book: far from normalizing Pentecostals, it assigns them to the margins, where only the like-minded can enter their world. Worst of all, it acknowledges, even if unintentionally, that faith is a matter of such subjective truth that the same intellectual give-and-take that we apply to politics or culture cannot be applied to religion. If this is so, then the evangelically inspired historians of American Protestantism have a long way to go before they acquire the confidence to paint accurate historical pictures of their subjects, shown in all their complexity, so that all readers, secular and religious, can pass judgment about the worlds that they created. ■

BANGKOK DIARIST

Monk Funk

I AM NOT A CONVERT TO Buddhism—just a student of it. My early view of the religion was shaped by the American media, which usually portrays Buddhists as pure, serene, and incorruptible. *Kundun*. *What's Love Got to Do With It?*, in which Tina Turner saves herself by embracing Buddhism. You get the point. And, as I interviewed monks and visited rural temples in Thailand last year, I found my positive stereotypes confirmed. The monks' sage words about the fellowship of all peoples compared favorably with the fiery, tribalist rhetoric I was used to hearing at synagogue on Yom Kippur.

THEN, LAST FALL, I ATTENDED A seminar held by the World Fellowship of Buddhists in Bangkok. At first, what I saw and heard was familiar: Westerners positively awestruck by the Eastern faith. Canadian schoolteachers and French fashion designers pondered how to work meditation into their lives. An Israeli actor dressed in baggy, pseudo-hippie pants spoke about how Buddhism had helped him survive the cycle of religious recrimination plaguing his homeland. Several earnest young foreigners living in rural Thailand lobbed question after question at a visiting monk, treating him almost like a rock star. The monk himself was a thirty-something American who had moved to Thailand to embrace the religion.

BUT, DURING BREAKS IN THE ACTION, Thais told me a different story. In Southeast Asia, they said, saffron-robed Buddhist monks were guilty of graft, lechery, and other crimes. I chuckled skeptically at their tales. But then, several days later, Thailand's lively newspapers broke a story about a wayward monk. It seems this particular monk would don a garish wig to hide his shaved head, then have sex with many women. (Thai Buddhist monks must abstain from sex and alcohol.) Soon other scandals started cropping up in the papers. One monk was accused of raping an eleven-year-old girl, another of committing necrophilia in crematoriums. One rural Thai woman was quoted as saying: "Monks having sex with followers is common. . . . Everybody just turns a blind

eye." A monk from northeastern Thailand was arrested after allegedly killing a young woman and hiding her body in a septic tank. U.N. human rights investigators opened a probe into a Cambodian monk they believed was torturing boys at his temple. In the most bizarre case, one paper reported that a Thai monk had roasted a dead baby to extract "magical" oils dripping from its corpse.

THESE STORIES ARE ESPECIALLY shocking because so many Westerners assume Buddhism to be fundamentally different from other faiths. It isn't. Like other religions, Buddhism is struggling to respond to modernization and the allure of capitalism. In Thailand, the number of young men entering the monkhood is declining, forcing the clergy to accept less committed, or less virtuous, candidates—candidates more likely to commit deviant acts. Sitting inside Bangkok's most important temple complex, a young monk named Abhinito told me that "modern society just doesn't have time to go to a monastery." (In response, Abhinito has set up a website to introduce Buddhism to Internet users.) And those who do sign up for the clergy increasingly refuse to shun materialism: Some monks carry cell phones or play violent virtual-reality games at Bangkok arcades. And, as materialism infects the monkhood, so does the strife it can bring.

BUT BUDDHISM ALSO HAS ITS OWN particular problems. The religion vests inordinate authority in a few elderly leaders, known in Thailand as the Sangha—a group that makes the pope's advisers look spry. The out-of-touch Sangha doesn't understand that Buddhism is having difficulty recruiting new monks or that some second-rate monks are committing unspeakable acts. "These guys [the Sangha] don't see that people now will reveal things the monks do, and will demand change," says Alan Lopez, a lecturer at the World Fellowship of Buddhists. So although the Sangha has defrocked a few errant monks, it has refused to support reform-oriented Buddhist groups, to strengthen the internal affairs division of the clergy, or to update religious doctrine, the way the Catholic Church did in Vatican II. According to one leading academic, over 95 percent of the textbooks Thai monks read today were produced almost a century ago.

BUDDHISM HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN a unifying force in an ethnically diverse region, and millions of Southeast Asians still regularly visit temples. No wonder, then, that the intelligentsia speculates that the monkhood's problems may foster social breakdown. What's more, in a region

where state social welfare is weak, monks perform vital good deeds such as feeding the poor and counseling the depressed. Some academics theorize that an increasing distrust of monks' counsel has contributed to a rising suicide rate in Thailand.

NOT THAT ANY OF THIS IS UNDERMINING Buddhism's reputation in the West. Today there are around two million Buddhists in America, including such high-profile celebrities as Richard Gere and Steven Seagal. Chicago alone has more than 60 Buddhist places of worship. American devotees are split between Theravada Buddhism, the faith common to Southeast Asia; Mahayana Buddhism, which is more popular in Northeast Asia; and Tibetan Buddhism, the religion of the Dalai Lama. All three subsets now boast a variety of American websites, activist groups, and retreat centers; and all three sponsor conferences, meditation retreats, seminars, and other activities. The Beastie Boys—whose member Adam Yauch is a Buddhist—even wrote a song about the faith. On July 2 the Dalai Lama attracted thousands of followers to the Mall in Washington.

AND, NO MATTER WHICH STRAIN OF Buddhism they follow, many American disciples won't let reality get in the way of their preconceptions about the religion. At a recent dinner with a pacifist-feminist friend who has lived in several Buddhist temples, I asked whether it bothered her that, in Thailand, the aged Sangha covers up sex crimes committed by monks and prohibits women from playing virtually any leading role in the religion. Or that in Sri Lanka some monks support the war against the Tamil rebels. No, she replied, insisting that Buddhism is dealing with its contradictions faster than other faiths. When I raised my concerns at a seminar on the religion, people simply shushed me. The media perpetuates this silence. *Time* magazine's glowing 1997 cover story on Buddhism in America, for instance, hardly mentioned any of the faith's problems.

OF COURSE, IT'S TRUE THAT Buddhism has a great deal to teach and that most monks are committed and upstanding. But a politically correct whitewashing of the religion's troubles solves nothing. After all, as one Buddhist scholar told me, "Buddha taught his disciples not to believe because of what your teacher says, but because of your own wisdom."

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The Truth About School Vouchers – 5 Vouchers Foster Integration

"Vouchers add another means to segregate our citizens, this time using public money."

Education Policy Project
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Versions of this claim frequently surface in the public dialogue about school choice programs. The facts tell a different story.

For example, evidence from the country's two largest voucher programs shows that school choice can foster higher levels of racial integration. At the same time, according to the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, America's *public schools* "remain largely segregated and are becoming more so...More than 70% of the nation's black students now attend predominantly minority [public] schools."

In Cleveland and Milwaukee, targeted voucher programs let low-income parents, mostly of color, choose public or private schools for their children. Through these programs, thousands of Black and Hispanic parents have chosen schools that previously were attended mostly by white students. The result? More integration at many schools participating in choice programs.

Here are some specifics.

CLEVELAND. Jay Greene of the Manhattan Institute studied whether choice students were more likely than public school students to attend schools that were racially representative of metropolitan Cleveland. He found that nearly one-fifth of voucher students attended such schools, compared to only 5 percent of public school students. As Greene observed, "The amount of integration is not great in either system, but it is markedly better in the choice program."

MILWAUKEE. Howard Fuller of Marquette University compared levels of racial isolation in Milwaukee public schools with private schools in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. Fuller found that less than a third of voucher students at private religious schools attended "intensely segregated" schools, compared to half of

Milwaukee public school students. Reflecting a standard used by the Harvard Civil Rights Project, Fuller defined an "intensely segregated" school as one where 90% or more of the enrollment was white or minority.

In summary, evidence from the country's two largest voucher programs directly contradicts claims that school choice increases segregation. To the contrary, more integration is a clear result of targeted school choice programs.

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